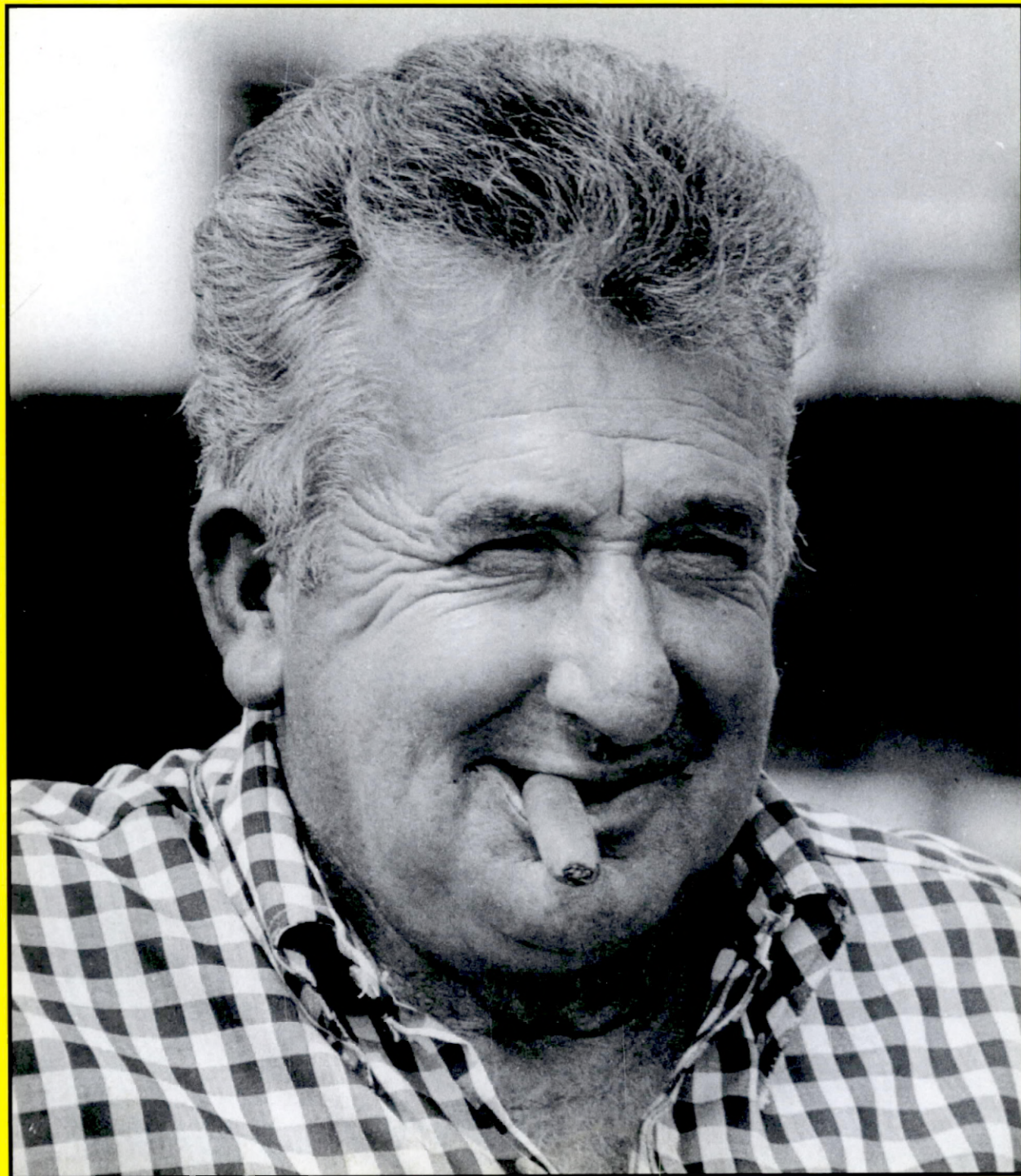


# **BANDWAGON**

**THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS  
HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.**

**SEPTEMBER - OCTOBER 1999**





# BANDWAGON

## THE JOURNAL OF THE CIRCUS HISTORICAL SOCIETY, INC.

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**FRED D. PFENING, JR. EDITOR AND PUBLISHER**

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### THE FRONT COVER

Dores Richard Miller, "king of the American truck circus," died at age 83 on September 8, 1999 in McCook, Nebraska. He had just watched the afternoon Carson & Barnes performance as he had done for all the years he owned a circus.

This issue of the *Bandwagon* is dedicated to his memory.

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I certify the statements made by me above are correct and complete. (signed) Fred D. Pfening, Jr, publisher. (10-1-99).

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# The Circus Stake Driver: The Best, Simplest, and Most Economical Machine Ever Invented!

## PART THREE

BY FRED DAHLINGER, JR.

### The Christy, Barnes and Dailey Stake Drivers

Three railroad circus stake drivers complete our coverage of wagon-based stake drivers. The first is that of the Christy Bros. show, which had a single hammer machine, number 7, in 1929. It was acquired or built sometime after a Christy inventory was compiled in July 1926. Rather stubby at 10 feet long, it was later identified as number 108 in a 1934 inventory. There is no evidence to indicate that it went to the two outfits which bought Christy's equipment, Cole Bros. in 1935 or Ken Maynard in 1936, and its ultimate disposition remains unknown. A photograph of the unit has yet to be discovered.

Commencing in 1929, Al G. Barnes master wagon builder John O. "Red" Forbes rebuilt the show's entire fleet of wagons, including the stake driver. The new one, numbered 17 from 1931 to 1934, was built like a battleship, in line with Forbes' nickname "Dreadnought." It had a heavy steel frame with thick reinforcing plates while the sills were heated and bent into shape on its predecessor. The drop frame arrangement was inspired by the 1907 Moeller-built driver which had been on Barnes for over a decade. Like the other Forbes-built wagons, the new driver could have gone through a railroad wreck without being damaged. The single hammer, rotating base, Gollmar lever arrangement was retained during the rebuild. This successor to the Moeller driver was retired following the 1934 season in favor of a Curtis triple.

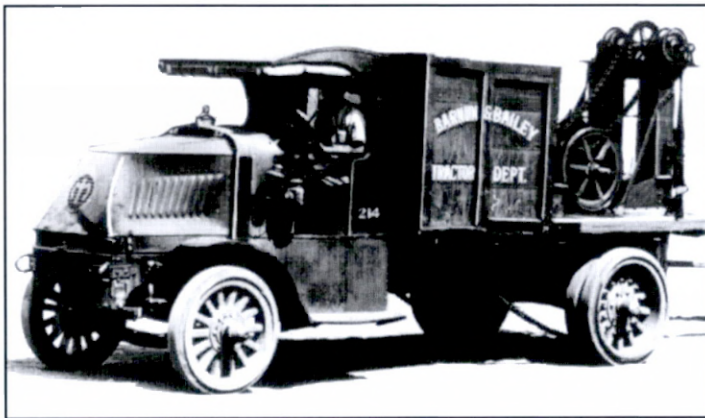
The last railroad show stake driver wagon to be built was the brutish-looking #69 machine of the 1946-1950 Dailey Bros.

Circus. This massive device looked like it was solid steel. A large bin up front held stakes while an engine in the middle drove the friction rollers by means of a chain drive. The Dailey double was ugly, but it must have hammered on those stakes very successfully. The initial two hammers of the first season were augmented by a third in 1947, making it similar to Curtis triples. Ben Davenport, owner of the Dailey outfit, embellished his rather modern show with a number of traditional effects, one of which was a baggage horse team that pulled the stake driver around the lot in some years. With limited need for stake driver wagons in the 1950s, it is likely that the Dailey triple was simply scrapped after the show closed.

### Diverse Stake Driver Observations

Because stake driving was second only to the laying out of the lot in the chronological logistics of lot operations, it was imperative that the

Fig. 57 The first truck mounted stake driver was the double of the 1917 Barnum & Bailey show Mack driver. The Mack Truck Historical Museum.



stake drivers be among the first wagons unloaded. A perusal of loading orders and train photographs indicates that this was typically the case, with the driver usually being on one of the first three or four flats unloaded. In at least two cases it was placed on the first flat to be unloaded, immediately behind the big top center pole wagon. In other cases, as on RBBB, the loading position was always on the first cut but varied in specific position from as far back as the 10th or 11th flat in 1928 to the first flat in 1942.

The width of some driver wagons may have been limited by the design of the big top pole wagon. Most big top poles loaded on the sides of the pole wagon, creating a canyon-like space into which the driver would have to fit. The driver wagon could not be wider than the bed of the pole wagon. Though the pole and driver wagons were the last ones loaded and taken to the train each night, by virtue of car shifting the flat on which they rode could become the first one unloaded in the morning.

The 1907 Gollmar and 1911 Forepaugh-Sells photographs cited previously provide the earliest illustrations of a driver in actual operation on the lot. A mere two horse team dragged each across the lot. Four horse teams were used to pull the heavier single and double hammer rotating deck machines. The big triple hammer machines were always assigned a four horse team because of their great weight. Sometimes a supervisor with a whistle signaled the driver as to when the team should pull ahead to the next stake position. A two elephant team frequently pulled the RBBB drivers around after baggage





Fig. 58 Red Forbes built this driver for the 1931 Al G. Barnes circus, shown here in 1933. Though the wagon was well built, it used technology that was over two decades old. Circus World Museum.

horses were dropped in 1938. Caterpillar tractors and such were the final means used to move drivers, commencing by 1949.<sup>34</sup> Their adoption was supported by retrofitting tractor poles onto the RBBB wagons. Initially RBBB number 108 was pulled by a tractor pole fitted into the normal pole position, a receptacle known as the "hound." Sometime between 1954 and 1956 an upward pivoting tractor pole assembly was welded to the front undergear. Driver amenities, such as seats and footboards, were removed when the dependence upon internal combustion vehicles became complete. What had been circus wagons became truck trailers.

#### Self-propelled Stake Drivers

The first twin hammer setup was not mounted on a wagon but on the first truck owned by the Ringlings. In 1917 a Mack AC Bulldog truck was added to the Barnum & Bailey show and assigned the number 214.

At the rear of its chassis was mounted a pair of fixed stake drivers,

Fig. 60 The earliest known view of a motorized show stake driver is this 1925 unit assembled in San Francisco for an unidentified circus.



positioned so that a pair of guy stakes could be driven simultaneously. These were not conventional mechanical drivers but a pair of belt-operated devices. Another unusual aspect of these twin hammers was that

they shared the same head drive shaft, driven by a common chain. One wishes that more information was available about this unusual setup. The only information comes from a pair of photographs in the Mack truck archives.<sup>35</sup> The 1918 motorized Coop & Lent Circus had a stake driver that was installed on a four-wheel trailer, but the first truck mounted driver with a truck show was possibly the one built by the Lindemanns of Wisconsin for their 1921 Lindemann Bros.' World's Greatest Motorized Show. Other than a report in the February 12, 1921 issue of *The Billboard* (page 60) noting that it was homemade and being mounted on a one-ton truck, nothing further is known of it. The relatively extensive photographic coverage of this circus fails to document this unique machine.

In 1925 an unidentified San Francisco firm installed a combination mechanical stake driver and hydraulic puller on the right side of a straight bed truck. As far as is known, it was the first time that hydraulic power was utilized on a circus vehicle, though the circus that commissioned it has not been determined. In the future, hydraulics would become one of the most popular forms of portable power transmission systems. The driver head, a gravity drop type similar to those already in use, was driven directly by the truck's drive shaft through a friction clutch. The gearing enabled 30 blows

per minute to be struck, with a claim that five stakes could be driven in the same time that it would take four men to hammer just one home. When it was desired to extract a stake, a hydraulic cylinder presumably provided the necessary uplift force, though a description is lacking. As if two features were not enough, this special truck had a "gypsy head" driven by a drive shaft. A sort of portable windlass, it was proposed to use it to raise poles and to tighten guy ropes. Cap Curtis had already tried to do something similar, using his spool wagons to raise big top center poles, but the risk was felt to be too great to men and equipment and was discontinued. One suspects that this revolutionary 1925 contrivance was just a bit too advanced for the time and that it was never duplicated.<sup>36</sup>

The new Russell Bros. Pan Pacific Circus of 1945 had a straight truck-mounted stake driver. It was the first of its type, with a rotating

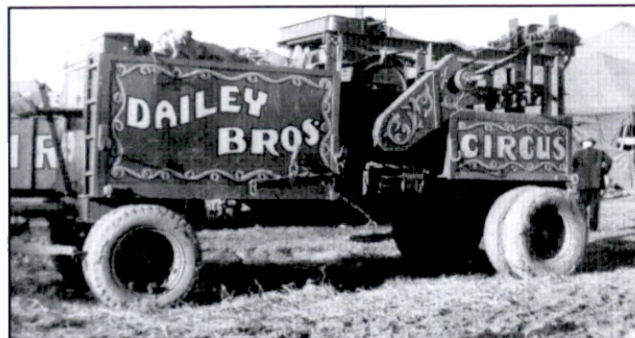


Fig. 59 Though not revered in his own time, Ben Davenport had several traditional circus elements on his Dailey Bros. outfit, including a horse-drawn stake driver wagon. Circus World Museum.

driver mounted on a truck chassis. Carrying number 26, it continued to serve on the subsequent Clyde Beatty Circus through 1956, the final season on rails. The number was changed at least once, by 1952, to number 20. The original stake box and rotating driver were augmented in 1948 by a mechanism behind the truck cab that appears to have been a stake puller apparatus. It is likely that this railroad show driver mechanism was later remounted on a Chevrolet straight truck chassis and served on the motorized Beatty show as late as 1960.

Seeking to reduce both labor costs and the time required to erect their



mammoth operation, RBBB managers tried a number of novel stake driver mountings. The year after Art Concello put a stake driving truck on his Russell railer, RBBB took the deck apparatus from one of its wagon mounted stake drivers and mounted it on the rear frame of Mack truck number 234 (number 134 until 1945). One source says the driver mechanism came from wagon 107, which may thus date its demise no later than 1945. The dual driver arrangements from both wagons 106 and 107 would have been available at the time. Regardless of the one selected, the driver was powered by a newer style engine, like the Hercules on number 108. Bill Rhodes points out that there were both advantages and disadvantages to the truck mount. The Mack could not readily

Mack was not available to haul vehicles from the train to the lot. Perhaps that was the reason the setup lasted only three seasons, 1946 to 1948.

World War II surplus yielded railroad cars and vehicles that were acquired by several different traveling circuses and carnivals. An ex-U.S. Army half-track served as the base for a RBBB dual hammer driver from 1949 to 1955, where it was assigned the number 250. Absolutely the ugliest and most unusual circus stake driver ever conceived, there was no doubt that the weight of this metallic

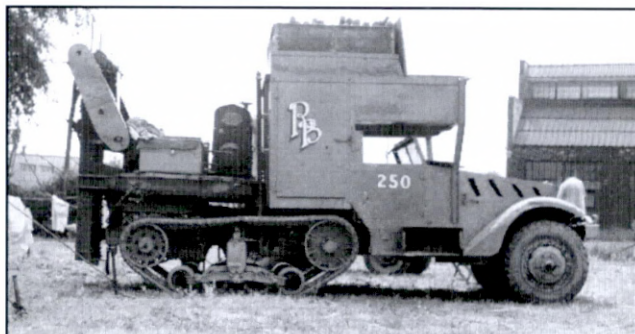


Fig. 64 City residents might have thought the community was being invaded when the clanking RBBB half track came rolling down the street in 1949. Circus World Museum.



Fig. 63 The first RBBB stake driver to be self-propelled was Mack 234 of 1946-1948, which carried the rotating double driver from a previous RBBB driver wagon. Pfening Archives.

navigate muddy lots and its mobility on them was limited. Further, so long as it was driving stakes the

Fig. 61 Art Concello may deserve the credit for assembling the first truck-mounted stake driver that retained the rotating deck feature. This is his 1945 unit on the 1948 Clyde Beatty railer. Circus World Museum.



monster could hold down any driver force. The driver mechanism which had been on Mack 134/234 was probably the one remounted on the half-track. It was fixed in a static position, the width of the tracks preventing the rotating feature of the deck mounting from being utilized. A fabricated metal housing behind and over the cab held a large supply of stakes. After languishing in a Sarasota scrap yard for decades, the stripped-down chassis of the number 250 half-track was acquired for preservation by a military equipment collector in the late 1990s.

For the final railroad tent season of RBBB in 1956, the stake driver from the half track was transferred to another ex-U.S. Army truck that was reassigned the number 250. It appears to have been a 2-1/2 ton truck. This one rode on conven-



Fig. 62 Jeep mounted stake driver on Biller Bros. Circus in 1949. Pfening Archives.

28, 1960 to D. R. Miller. His Miller Equipment Company installed it on the back of a Chevy straight bed truck for use on the motorized Al G. Kelly & Miller Bros. Circus. Photographs place it there as late as 1965.

A single hammer mechanism was mounted on an ex-U. S. Army jeep acquired by RBBB and one of these arrangements was on the show beginning in 1951 and continuing through most of the 1950s. Different numbers were assigned to the jeep-mounted drivers, including 2, 4 and 7. Lighter than wagon or truck mounted machines, the hammer on this platform was more akin to the portable drivers to be discussed next. It represented the last of the stake driver arrangements devised for use on a railroad tent circus.

#### Portable Stake Drivers

In the late 1930s and early 1940s,



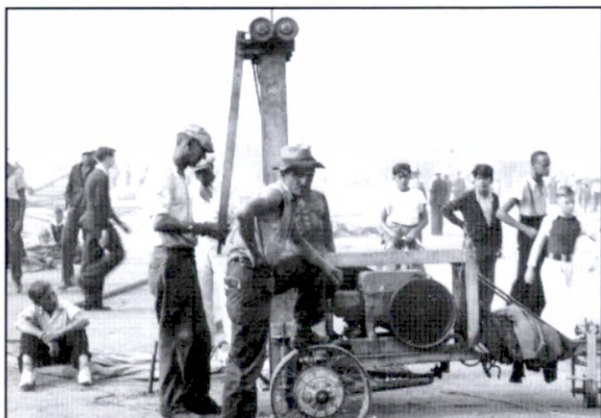


Fig. 65 Maneuverable with manual effort alone, several similar portable stake drivers like this 1938 Hagenbeck-Wallace unit found favor on both rail and truck shows. Circus World Museum.

several railroad shows fielded small stake drivers on trailer frames. It was a device that could be readily towed behind a small motorized vehicle or a wagon. Indeed, they were so commonplace that we suspect that they were commercially made for another purpose, such as fence post driving. The circus simply discovered how useful they could be for their own purposes and quickly added them to their arsenal of mechanical devices. Whether they were modeled after earlier circus stake drivers is unknown. Who devised and built them is unknown, as is their reason for existence. We can only hypothesize that they were made to be readily moved into tight places where a wagon-sized driver could not be navigated. The earliest one we've discovered is documented in a Hagenbeck-Wallace photograph dated 1938. It was a Gollmar lever design driver mounted on a pair of pneumatic tires. Another was on RBBB by 1940, used for the cookhouse tent and else-

Fig. 66 The heftiest portable driver was the one fabricated for Ben Davenport's 1944 Dailey Bros. Circus. The elephant was one of Davenport's nostalgic touches. Circus World Museum.



where. It was towed like a trailer behind one of the cookhouse wagons. One can also be seen in a 1944 Cole Bros. shot and another was with Russell Bros. Pan Pacific in 1945. Ben Davenport's 1944 Dailey Bros. operation had the heaviest "portable" driver ever built, riding on four pneumatic tires. It was towed around the

lot by an elephant. Proving effective, a second portable driver was added for 1945, but both were replaced by the large wagon-mounted dual driver for 1946.

The portable format was adopted by some motorized shows, too. The earliest may have been the one that Charlie Sparks had on his Downie Bros. outfit by 1936.<sup>37</sup> Charles Lockier fabricated one for the James M. Cole Circus that made the circus page of the July 10, 1943 *Billboard* (page 39). A truly light weight driver on a portable frame was with C. R. Montgomery's 1946 tenter. Subsequently there have been many other similar machines economically fabricated for truck shows by enterprising mechanics and welders.

#### Stake Putting and Pullers

With an interval of nearly eight decades between the adoption of the tent (1825) and the invention of the mechanical stake driver (1904), it is no wonder that it took even longer to invent a mechanical stake puller. Again, the delay can be assigned to the circus pre-occupation with tradition and the ready availability of strong arms among the canvasmen. Until logistics forced a compression of the time allotted for their removal, there was no desire to expend capital on the device. On-site labor was available without additional cost. The difficulty in tracing the development of pullers is

largely because they were used primarily at night, after the patrons had left for home and in an era before night photography made it possible to record their activities.

The origin and development of the first type of stake puller has not been determined. George S. Cole's reminiscences of his days with the 1849 circus of Aaron Turner included the following observation: "Stake pullers had not then been invented, and the stakes had to be eased out of the ground by thumping them hard with a sledge hammer on one side; then another." Within the next decade or so a suitable device was contrived. A stake puller, description not given, was purchased at a cost of \$1.75 on July 2, 1863 by Mabie's Great Show. A "Stake Puller" was among the equipment of the Barnum show when its assets were sold at auction in early 1875. When the Great Australian Circus encountered financial difficulties in 1877, among the assets attached was a stake



Fig. 67 The lift beam of the 1927 Al G. Barnes Mack was replaced by a short and stout A-frame by the time it was photographed again in 1932. Circus World Museum.

puller. The stake puller of the 1879 Great London show was described by one reporter as "a little sort of carriage to which was attached a chain, which was wound around the stake to be pulled. A little exertion and up would fly the pole [stake]." The assets of the 1881 Burr Robbins Circus also included "1 Stake Puller."<sup>38</sup>

The form which is known from photography or prints (see *McClure's*, June 1895, page 56) is based on a simple machine, the lever. It consists of a long lever arm pivoting on the axle between a pair of spoked wheels that were from one to two feet in diameter. A length of chain was connected to the short end of the lever,



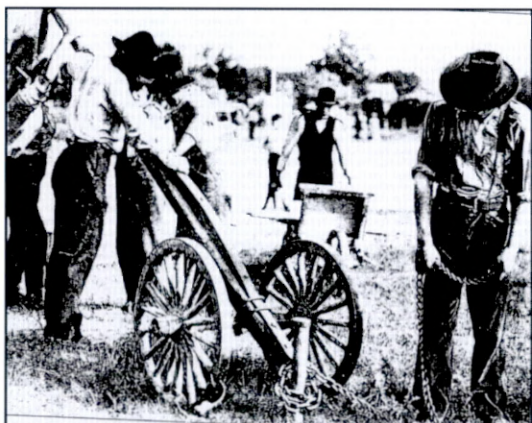
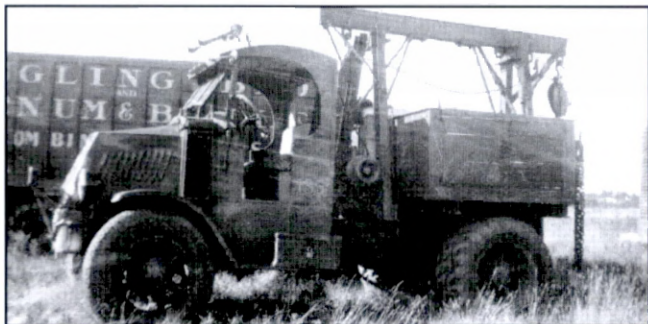


Fig. 68 Most stake pulling, such as the work being done by this 1899 Ringling crew, was performed long after the crowds had departed for home. Circus World Museum.

which measured from one to one and one-half feet long. The chain was coiled twice or so around the body of the stake, with the loose end of the chain held against the earth by the foot of a member of the puller gang. The remaining three or four members of the gang pulled down on the elevated long end of the lever, which was six or more feet long. The action readily extracted the stake from the soil. The mechanical advantage of the device was five or more, meaning that every pound of force applied by the operators was multiplied by five and applied to the stake. The trade off was that the men had to move their end of the puller five times as far as the stake end of the lever moved. The 1895-1896 Ringling route book (page 11) termed the short end of the puller the "reach" and the long end the "tongue." The lever was typically a stout, rectangular cross-section, wood member, with metal strapping and additional wood

Fig. 70 The short wheelbase and high lift beam gave RBBB Mack 135 a jaunty, go get'em look that may have originally attracted the attention of John Ringling. Pfening Archives.



reinforcing it along the upper and lower faces. With stake pulling usually the last activity performed on the circus lot, the pullers were typically stacked on top of the big top center pole wagon, one of the last wagons to leave the lot, for the journey between engagements.

Any shop or blacksmith with wood-working equipment could have fabricated a stake puller. The earliest builders of the device have not been determined. One on the Ringling show in the 1890s was fitted with wood wheels and metal hubs and tires. Others of a later vintage had wheels made entirely of metal, like farm wagon wheels. The Beggs Wagon Company included them in their c. 1916 wagon catalog. They claimed: "We make all sizes of Stake Pullers, from the very heavy with Concord steel axles and Sarven patent wheels, to the light size for Carnival and Chautauqua use."<sup>39</sup> Chicago-based tent maker Driver Bros., Inc., offered a stake puller on wheels for \$30.00, presumably in the 1930s. Baker-Lockwood offered one constructed of seasoned oak with heavy iron castings and mounted on 16 inch iron wheels. New ones were \$25.00; used ones in three grades were priced from \$12 to \$18. United States Tent and Awning offered the best, "Built to last a lifetime" as the advertising claimed. The tongue was made of tough hardwood with metal plate reinforcing it at the pivot point and providing the attachment for the chain.

The hubbed-wheels, made of well-seasoned ash, were 20 inches in diameter with a 2-3/4 inch face and iron-tired. It was the U. S. Tent & Awning puller style which was photographed on big circus lots.

Priced once at \$70.00, the Depression deflated the price to half that. Al Stencell reports that carnival people refer to the stake puller as a "Georgia buggy" for reasons unknown.

Another common form of stake removal used a chain attached to the harness of an elephant. After the elephant partially knelt down, the chain was wrapped around the stake. Upon command from the handler, the bull simply stood up, the stake incapable of resisting the overwhelming strength of the beast.

The unusual dual hammer driver of the 1917 Barnum & Bailey show, the one mounted on the rear of a Mack truck, may have also been capable of pulling stakes. By some means not described, the Gollmar Bros. stake driver of circa 1907-1911 was also used to pull stakes.

Similarly, the driver of the



Fig. 69 The 101 Ranch may have had the first Mack truck outfitted with a winch and lift beam that could be used for stake removal, adding one by 1926. Pfening Archives

1917 Yankee Robinson Circus could pull stakes, or at least the claim was made that it could. We suspect that the motions used to lift the driver hammer were harnessed to extract the stakes from the ground. The only combination driver/puller of which reasonable knowledge is available is that of the 1925-1931 Sparks Circus. It has been discussed previously. Uniquely, the Robbins Bros. stake pulled of 1927-1930 was the first stand alone puller to be carried on its own vehicle. It was likely an outgrowth of the earlier Yankee Robinson machine.

As noted previously, hydraulic power was used on a truck mounted stake puller in 1925. Its use did not proliferate until hydraulic systems for construction and other moveable





Fig. 71 No stake could resist the uplifting forces of a Hyster cable reel and derrick mounted on the back of a Caterpillar tractor. This is a RBBB Cat on Barnes-Floto in 1938. Circus World Museum.

equipment became commonplace in the 1960s. Many subsequent truck shows utilized hydraulic powered stake drivers and pullers, canvas spools and so on.

At least four Mack Bulldog trucks were fitted with horizontal lift beams and winches that enabled them to pull stakes. Likely it was the Mack firm or one of their agents who first suggested the arrangement, as Mack illustrated diverse specialized applications to spur sales. One Mack catalog featuring various modifications to their AC-style lineup includes a tool truck and wrecker arrangement. It incorporated a lift beam extending beyond a box body, similar to those mounted on circus-owned Bulldogs.

Fig. 73 W. H. B. Jones filmed the toe pin drivers of the 1937 Cole show as they went about their task. Circus World Museum.



In addition to pulling stakes, the circus Macks pulled wagons between the train and show grounds and usually were fitted with water tanks for delivery service on the lot. Wire rope from the winch, which was usually placed immediately behind the truck cab, was routed over two pulleys that were affixed to the beam. Exactly how the wire rope was attached to the stake to be extracted has not been determined, with one exception that will be explained momentarily.

The first of the Mack Bulldog stake pullers was with the Miller Bros. 101 Ranch Wild West by 1926. It served there through 1931 and was then stored until 1935, when it commenced a five year term on Cole Bros. In 1936 it was identified by the letter "B." After losing the puller in the February 20, 1940 winter quarters fire, the Cole show acquired replacements in the 1940s and often had at least one Mack with a lift beam mounted on it. It has been claimed that the Ranch truck inspired a similar equipped Mack for the 1927 Al G. Barnes show. A 1928 photograph confirms that a winch was behind the cab, with rope leading to a location at the back of the water tank. A lift beam was installed in a very high position in 1929, only to be replaced before 1932 by a simple A-frame construction at the back edge of the water tank.

RBBB got into the act by 1932 when John Ringling personally bought a Mack with a lift beam and winch. Photographs dated June 13, 1930 show this specially outfitted Bulldog at the Mack factory, complete with a low, longitudinally-split, box

body of heavy wood and steel reinforcement, and a high lift frame. From the photographs, it's clear that the stake pulling apparatus was a later addition. The RBBB number 135 is on the cab in the photographs, aligning it with the circus a year and one-half prior to the generally ascribed date of 1932. Circus engineer Bob MacDougall has analyzed the operation of this truck and determined that the wire rope from the winch was not directly attached to the stake. The rope was affixed to the end of a jib pole that pivoted about a mounting point on the rear of the truck frame. The design provided both a mechanical force advantage and a means by which two stakes could be extracted simultaneously, there being a spreader attached to the end of the pole. Assigned number 135, the Mack served through 1952 on RBBB and was then sold



Fig. 72 An exception to the Mack mounted stake pullers were the pair of Chevrolets on the 1937 Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus. Circus World Museum.

to the Royal American Shows railroad carnival. It is now stored at Circus World Museum in unrestored condition, the stake removal equipment having been discarded many years ago by others.

Howard Y. Bary's 1937-1938 Hagenbeck-Wallace railer was the first show to field two stake pullers mounted on trucks. Each was mounted on a Chevrolet truck chassis that pulled wagons between the train and the lot and also served as a water wagon the lot. The intent of the device was to streamline the tear-down operation by 30 minutes each night. Reportedly it was built from blueprints which Bary had made the previous winter and a second machine was planned.<sup>40</sup> One was added to the show early in 1937 and had a standard Chevrolet truck cowl and hood. Later that year, by June



15, a second unit with a cab over engine arrangement was added. Each had a winch and lift beam arrangement similar to the Mack truck mounted pullers devised a decade earlier. Both were devoid of identification in 1937. Two cab over engine pullers were on the 1938 show and each bore a new paint job that included the legend "Hagenbeck-Wallace Circus Chevrolet Power Stake Puller." They bore the numbers 1 and 2 and were accompanied by three other Chevrolet trucks used as canvas loaders. The fleet probably tied in with the Chevrolet exhibit featured in the center of the menagerie tent that season, a follow-up to an earlier exploitation of Pontiac products as early as 1934 on the same circus. Chevrolet placed a full page advertisement featuring the five Hagenbeck-Wallace trucks in the December 2, 1939 *Billboard* (page 65), but given the economics of the time undoubtedly it garnered few orders from outdoor showmen. The Hagenbeck-Wallace trucks were returned to Chevrolet when the show closed.

Another stake pulling device using some type of cable spool arrangement was implemented on the truck mounted stake driver of the Russell Bros./Clyde Beatty railer in the 1940s.

In later years, Caterpillar tractors, fork trucks, and other construction and commercial vehicles have been used like mechanical elephants to withdraw stakes from the ground. One of the RBBB Cats had a rear-mounted Hyster cable reel and derrick which used a dual chain arrangement to pull two stakes simultaneously, each chain held by a different canvasman. The 1947 Sparks Circus was among the first circuses to use a fork truck and one of the jobs it performed was stake pulling. After the chain was wrapped around the stake in the usual manner it was simply affixed to one of the truck's forks. It worked like a mechanical elephant.<sup>41</sup> In years to come many motorized circuses would utilize hydraulically powered front end loaders, Bobcats and other construction equipment in the erection and teardown of circus tents.

#### Related Topics

This monograph would be incomplete if we did not include some remarks about the circus hardware associated with stake drivers. This includes pins and stakes, chains and

ropes, the telegraph wagon and the stake and chain wagon.

#### Pins and Stakes, Chains and Ropes

The circus tent is not a self supporting structure. The gravitational forces acting on its mass pull it down to the earth's surface. It is held in the air by means of an intricate web of ropes and poles, the forces from which are transferred to the ground by the stakes. Friction between the exterior surface of the stake and the soil is the force which restrains gravity from collapsing the tent.

The earliest stakes may have been cut and shaped daily from local tree limbs or trunks. The practice would have been like that of the center poles, which were fashioned from a locally grown tree before it became the practice to transport a pole between dates. Six decades after the adoption of the tent, the fledgling Ringling brothers made their first stakes from oak poles cut from a grove next to a swamp, just outside Baraboo. After painting the stakes, they were allowed to season in the woods, presumably meaning that the moisture was permitted to evaporate, making them both lighter and stronger. The brothers had paid for the privilege of cutting timber in the swamp.<sup>42</sup> Wood stakes could have been made with the use of an axe and/or hatchet, along with a draw shave to remove bark and develop something of a pointed end for penetrating the soil. A totally slippery surface would not have been desirable as it is the friction between the surface of the stake and the soil which provides the stake's resistance from being pulled out by the forces transmitted from the tent.

The earliest known document to mention a stake type device is an 1837 auction catalog of the 2nd Section of the Zoological Institute. Among the appurtenances of the tent listed are "chains, ropes, guy pins." In another listing mention is made of "ropes,



Fig. 74 Frank Fellows' stake pointer was like a giant kids' pencil sharpener. Here it's being used to put a point on hundreds of stakes at RBBB's Sarasota quarters in 1950. Circus World Museum.

guy chains, pins." It is possible that what we now refer to as stakes were known in 1837 as guy pins, if our analysis of the terminology of the day is correct. Tony Agler, who toured with circuses from 1834 to 1888, stated in a 1910 memoir that in his time circuses had "chain guys and dogwood stakes." When Hiram Orton sold his circus in 1857, the tent apparatus included "guy ropes." The word "Stakes" first appears in an 1863 journal kept by Mabie's Great Show. An unknown quantity of them was purchased at Adel, Iowa, on July 10, while the show was enroute.<sup>43</sup>

Two related circus sale documents, one of 1868 and another from 1870, possibly differ in their terminology. The earlier item includes ropes, chains and "Stakes," whereas the latter mentions "Ropes, Chains and iron guy pins" as part of the tent apparatus. The ropes or chains of Lake's Hippo-Olympiad were called "guys"

Fig. 75 James Peppers and his horse Bill are taking a water break from their daily duties on RBBB in 1941. Bill was the show's last baggage horse. Circus World Museum.





when that show went up at auction on February 21, 1870. A New York journalist who traveled with the Howes aggregation in the early 1870s called the stakes of the show "tent-pegs," a term not found in circus literature, suggesting it was from outside the business. In 1875, the auction catalog of the P. T. Barnum Universal Exposition Company included an abundance of specialized terminology including "Stakes," "Iron Stakes" and "Wooden Guy Stakes," "Guard Stakes," "Toe Pins" and "Laying out Pins," along with "Chains," "Main Guys," "Brace Guys," and "Ridge Ropes for large top." "Guy ropes, and Chains" were among the surplus items offered at the Barnum & London surplus sale of December 16, 1880. Presumably the verb "guy" was applied to the securing of the tent, and the ropes or chains used in the process as "guys."<sup>44</sup>

The act of "guying out the tent" defined the process whereby a gang of canvasmen proceeded around the big top, from one guy rope to another, pulling them tight to stretch out and tighten the canvas. Showmen termed the action "guying out" and later "ragging out," presumably because "rag" was show slang used to identify the big top itself. To coordinate the pulling action of the men of the gang, chanteys were chanted. Of the two ropes attached to the canvas at each pole, one was called a main guy while the other was a pull rope.

As the gang pulled on the main guy, one of the crew forced the double half-hitch knot in the main guy downward on the stake, securing the increased pull on the canvas. Then, the pull rope was affixed to a second, adjacent stake, providing secondary holding power in the event of a storm. After securing the main and pull guys, the ropes attached to the canvas between the pole positions, the extra or guys, were tied off to the single stake between the pairs of pole stakes. They were pulled so tight that they created localized valleys in the canvas top, providing a desired drainage path for rain on the top. On some shows diagonal oriented "funny" ropes connected in crosswise fashion from one pole to adjacent stakes created an X-bracing effect, further stiffening the tent against the elements. The 1947 RBBB tent included an improvement on these so-called "funny" ropes by having a

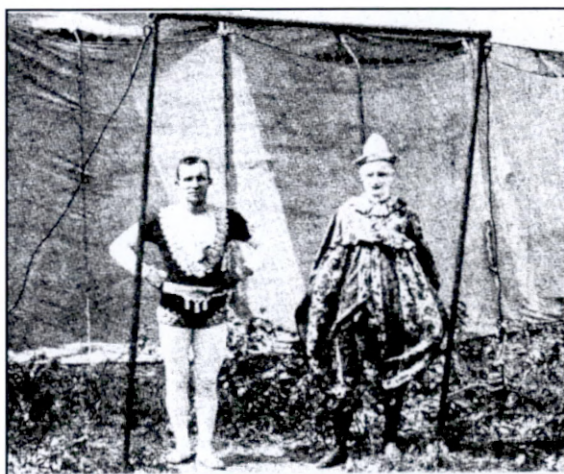


Fig. 76 This circus tent photograph was taken when chains were used for the main guys and metal rods served as the extra guys. Pfening Archives.

continuous rope proceeding from stake to adjacent pole around the periphery of the big top.<sup>45</sup>

The term "chains" refers to the lengths of that material used to secure the loads from the poles and canvas to the stake. Chains were used in lieu of ropes, which could be cut by towners seeking revenge on the traveling showmen. The aggregate weight of many chains obviously represented a great burden to carry, especially to overland showmen. Their use has been documented in the literature only with railroad circuses, being mentioned in P. T. Barnum Circus reviews or documents of 1873 and 1875, and shown in photographs of the Burr Robbins circus probably taken in the 1880s. Perhaps their great weight prevented them from being utilized on overland shows, where their mass would have caused even greater hardships in navigating rudimentary roads. In addition to stakes and chains, at least one circus also used bent iron rods to support the edge of the big top canvas between poles. These devices can be seen in one undated photograph taken in the late nineteenth century. It was typical to have an additional rope attached to the canvas in this position and to secure it to another stake driven between the pairs of stakes to which the side pole ropes were fastened.<sup>46</sup>

Beyond stakes being used to secure the tents, singular stakes were also used to secure the lower front end of seat stringers, in which application they were termed "toe pins." The use has been traced to as early as 1879, when it appears in the Barnum show

route book (page 17). The men who drove them in were called the "toe pin gang."

W. C. Coup's posthumously-published memoir, *Sawdust and Spangles*, (page 135) states that the iron-ringed stakes cost fifty cents each and that circuses required hundreds of them. Unfortunately, he did not specify a date but one suspects circa 1880. Entries in a Ringling Bros. ledger of 1912-1913 show that they were then paying three and a half cents for tent stakes, the purchases being made in quantities of

greater than 1,000 pieces. Like most other Ringling purchases, they bought things more economically than many other shows, often relying upon cheap prices in the small town of Baraboo to give them an edge over the competition, even after they became the boss show. The stakes sold by the United States Tent and Awning Company in a 1919 catalog were described as being round, second growth hickory with wrought iron ferrules or bands and were offered in 32, 39, 42, 48 and 60 inch lengths. Prices ranged from twenty to fifty cents each. "Stake bands" made of malleable iron could also be bought in six different heights ranging from 1-3/4 to 3 inches, with prices from five to eight and one-half cents each. Wrought and malleable iron would not have been as hard as steel bands and might have proved more durable in contact with hammers and sledges. Whether they were heated and shrunk onto stakes, or merely beat into position on a taper is unknown. Iron tent stakes were also offered, 1-1/2 inches in diameter and in 12 or 30 inch lengths. Baker-Lockwood Manufacturing Company, Inc. offered square, round, natural growth or turned stakes in its 1928 catalog. Iron banding was offered and lengths ranged from 10 to 48 inches, with pricing from twenty-five to forty-five cents each. Ferrules up to 2-1/2 inches in diameter were six cents a piece. Most all tent manufacturers offered hardwood stakes, a material which offered the longest term service for big tent use.

The retention of stakes for more than one use also brought about the need to prevent the mushrooming of the head from the blows of the sledges. This was accomplished by the installation of an iron, and later,



steel, band called a ferrule around the circumference of the head of the stake. These may have been about a quarter of an inch thick by half to two inches along the length of the stake. They can be seen in the earliest of tent hardware photography and we suspect that they were utilized soon after shows began carrying stakes from one site to another. The application of the band may have made the stake reusable and also saved the time it took to cut and prepare stakes at each engagement. With the number of stakes increasing with the growth of tent sizes, this small advance probably saved thousands of dollars in labor and material costs.

The making of stakes became a ritual winter quarters activity in the spring, as the show prepared for the road. C. J. Sedlmayr, Jr. told the author that new laborers hired for his Royal American Shows railroad carnival in the middle of this century were usually set to the initial task of making stakes. With timber selected from the appropriate cross-sectional area and cut to the desired length, draw shaves were then used to give them the requisite tapered shape for driving into the earth. The arduous work, a show rite of passage, literally separated the men from the boys. Those not up to the task were quickly seen walking down the road leading away from the show's quarters. Those who stuck to the task proved themselves worthy of continued employment.

Frank Fellows designed and built a stake pointer as part of the work he executed for the Col. Tim McCoy Wild West in 1938. A great labor saver, it was eventually acquired by RBBB and put into service at their Sarasota, Florida winter quarters. Photographs show mounds of neatly stacked stakes in the vicinity of this gigantic pencil-sharpener.

Automobile rear axle stubs became popular as stake material because they were both rugged and cheap. The salvaging of parts from Model T Fords may have served as the first source of such pieces, becoming available in the late 1910s to 1920s. The primary problem with axle stubs was the ease with which splinters could be broken off the hardened steel gearing by the blow of hammers.



Fig. 77 The 1888 Ringling Bros. telegraph wagon led the wagon train as the show headed for each day's show grounds. Circus World Museum.

These airborne missiles could readily injure spectators who gathered around to witness the mesmerizing activity of the stake drivers. Even before our litigious times, these incidents resulted in several costly lawsuits for outdoor shows.<sup>47</sup>

### The Telegraph Wagon

In wagon show days, the lead crew that set out ahead of the main body of the wagon train traveled in a wagon which was known as the "Telegraph Wagon." One is mentioned in 1868 and 1870 equipment listings. Another was described by overland showman Louis Wood in 1910. He stated "The first [wagon] out was the ticket wagon, which was also called the 'telegraph wagon,' occupied by the manager and a man hired in the town who knew the road perfectly. A sack of gypsum or sometimes flour was carried to mark the road for those who came behind." Earl Chapin May described the arrival of the Ringling telegraph wagon at his father's Rochelle, Illinois home on June 13, 1889. Drawn by four horses, it was a long blue wagon with a tarpaulin top. Several workmen were sleeping therein, presumably upon a bed over the wagon's cargo of sledges, iron layout pins and the like. This gathering of men and equipment was the first to reach the circus show grounds and bore the responsibility to lay out the lot in advance of the arrival of the canvas. Legendary boss hostler Spencer "Delavan" Alexander

(1851?-1911) accompanied the crew, which he called the "stake and chain gang." A photograph of an 1888 Ringling wagon bearing the word "TELEGRAPH" on its canvas cover has been discovered, providing a visual companion to May's remembrance. A rather small and light vehicle, this telegraph wagon could only have transported a minimum of men and baggage given its light construction.<sup>48</sup> Why the name "telegraph" was applied to these wagons has not

been learned. Perhaps it was thought that their early arrival "telegraphed" the impending arrival of the entire troupe.

### The Stake and Chain Wagon

When it became a practice to retain the stakes and transport them from one engagement to another is not known, but it would have brought about the requirement for a wagon to haul them. The 1837 Zoological Institute auction inventory includes the generic term "baggage wagons," but the first mention of a wagon specifically assigned the task of carrying stakes is in the Barnum show route book for 1873, which mentions stake wagons (page 33). Wagons designated solely to haul stakes existed as early as 1898. There were two on the Ringling circus that year, stake wagons Nos. 6 and 8, according to the 1898 route book. The earliest documented use of "stake and chain wagon" is found in an 1881 inventory. No doubt there had been an earlier definition of specific tasks assigned to a certain wagon, one which led to the specialized construction we now associate with various types of baggage wagons, such as pole, jack, stringer and so on. Some of these styles are listed in the 1875 P. T. Barnum Universal Exposition Company auction catalog, but no stake and chain vehicle is listed. "Box Wagon" appears to have been the term utilized to define a variety of the show's baggage wagons.

Specialization of baggage wagons may have occurred in the 1850s, at least one account of the period lists a number of different purpose baggage



wagons. Tony Agler's 1910 memoir states specifically that the circus' use of chain guys and dog wood stakes "is where the stake and chain wagon got its name." His introduction of the phrase comes at a time in his memoir when he was describing the overland circus, or "wagon show life" as he termed it, of the mid-nineteenth century. It formed the great bulk of his experience. He includes "stake and chain wagons" in a list of ten different types of baggage wagons, each assigned a specific purpose.<sup>49</sup> Documents covering the sale of the Burr Robbins Circus to Myers & Shorb in 1881 include "1 Large Stake and Chair (sic) Wagon" which had been built by Sebastian of New York. The 1891 Barnum & Bailey Route Book (page 19) contains specific mention of "Big Top Stake and Chain Wagons," and an "Oblong Stake and Chain Wagon" along with accompanying rope wagons. One of the more unusual items regarding stake and chain wagons was one with the Cole Bros. World Toured Circus in the 1910s. The Jones brothers, who owned the show, had the name of each wagon painted on the side of it. One of these bore the name "stake and chain."

For certain applications the stake wagon was towed around the show grounds, with stakes tossed from it at the various sites where they were eventually driven into the ground. Wheelbarrows were used to distribute stakes on circus grounds and one can be seen in an 1899 Ringling route book photo. Later, RBBB and other circuses had small wagons that carried stakes to various spots around the lot. One such vehicle, a small gilley wagon driven by James Peppers, became something frequently remarked upon by various show visitors because it was pulled by the last baggage horse carried by RBBB, a beast named Bill.

#### Notes

34. A history of tracked vehicles and the circus has yet to be written. The well known examples include 1945 Arthur Bros.; 1941-1950 Cole Bros.; 1946-1950 Dailey Bros.; 1938 Hagenbeck-Wallace; and 1938-1956 RBBB. Little known utilizations include a possible 1913 Caterpillar trial by Ringling Bros.; a July 10, 1914 Ringling Bros. field trial of a Killen-Strait tractor; 1916 Sells-Floto, possibly a Caterpillar; and circa 1923 to 1926 Al G. Barnes Caterpillar tractor. H. H. Linn



Fig. 78 The Cole Bros. World Toured Circus of circa 1917 painted the function of baggage wagons on the side. Here's the stake and chain wagon. Circus World Museum.

(?-1937) also created at least two different tracked vehicles, one with a single rear track, that were used to pull his dog and pony show operation. One, dated 1907-1909, was steam powered. For some coverage see H. H. Linn in *Billboard*, March 28, 1926, p. 32; herald for the Linn's show at CWM; Bill Rhodes, "4-Wheel Drive Vehicles," *The White Tops*, July-August 1980, pp. 38-42, and "Half Tracks, Macks, Blazers All Used to Pull Circus Wagons," *White Tops*, January-February 1982, pp. 6-7.

35. There is substantial documentation about trucks and their circus use. See Fred D. Pfening, Jr. "Tractors and Trucks on Circuses," *Bandwagon*, January-February 1965, pp. 16-17; "Mack Bull Dogs," *Bandwagon*, March-April 1980 *Bandwagon*, pp. 4-12; "More on Circus Mack Trucks," *Bandwagon*, February-March 1981, pp. 19-21; and William L. Rhodes, "Ringling-Barnum Bulldogs," *Bandwagon*, May-June 1988, pp. 16-26.

36. *Billboard*, January 3, 1925, p. 76. The Hagen Manufacturing Company constructed similar side mounted units for the 1964 King Bros. and Sells & Gray motorized shows. These could be extended from the truck frames via a retractable mechanism. See *Amusement Business*, October 3, 1964, p. 28.

37. *White Tops*, November 1936, p. 6.

38. *Billboard*, August 13, 1904, p. 17; the Mabie journal containing the entry was abstracted by Gordon Yadon and published in *Bannerline*, April 15, 1966, pp. 2-12; Helen McCann White, "A Circus Gone Up," *Minnesota History*, XXXVIII, 8, pp. 318-331; *Baltimore American and Commercial Advertiser*, April 27, 1879, courtesy William L. Slout.

39. The Beggs catalog is mentioned in *Billboard*, January 15, 1916, p. 29. Copies of it exist in numerous collections.

40. *Billboard*, May 22, 1937, p. 67.

41. Cover, *Little Circus Wagon*, January-February 1976.

42. Alfred T. Ringling, *Life Story of the Ringling Brothers* (Chicago: R. R. Donnelley & Sons, 1900), pp. 177-178. Canadian impresario Al Stencell also personally cut his first circus tent poles in a local forest.

43. Thomas Brooks, Papers, Howard Tibbals Collection; Tony Parker (Agler), *On the Road with a Wagon Show 53 Years* (Winfield, Kansas, 1910), p. 3; Earl Chapin May Papers, CWM; Adel, Iowa, was, coincidentally, the winter home of the Orton Circus.

44. Cope MacAllister, *Uncle Gus and the Circus* (the author, 1984), pp. 30, 64; copy, CWM; "A Plember," *The Mysteries and Miseries of the Great Metropolis* (New York, D. Appleton and Co.), 1874, p. 226; Missouri Historical Society; *Tie New York Clipper*, November 27, 1880, p. 287.

45. See Thomas P. Parkinson, "Big Tops Bloom But Chanteys Disappear," *Billboard*, May 27, 1957, pp. 1, 64. "Guying out the tents" was the label applied to a photo in the 1895-1896 Ringling route book describing the activity of tightening the guys. The 1947 observation came from Howard C. Tibbals and Robert S. MacDougall.

46. *Bandwagon*, July-August 1968, p. 20.

47. See *Billboard*, April 11, 1960.

48. McAllister, pp. 30, 64; *Billboard*, March 19, 1910, p. 98; Earl Chapin May, *The Circus From Rome to Ringling* (1932; rpt. Dover, 1962), pp. 157-159. May erred and specified the date as May 1889, perhaps placing any or all of the reminiscence into question; CWM collections. The 1888 Ringling Telegraph wagon is similar to an existing Parsons family concession wagon that is preserved at CWM. It is a very light duty vehicle of carriage-like construction.

49. Agler, pp. 3, 14.



# SINKING IN ST. PAUL: YANKEE ROBINSON'S GREAT MODERN SHOW, 1875

By Stuart Thayer

*This paper was presented at the 1999 Circus Historical Society convention.*

In the mid-nineteenth century St. Paul, Minnesota had the reputation of being a graveyard for theatrical companies. This was in the mid-nineteenth century. When Yankee Robinson's Circus foundered there in 1875 a reporter for the *St. Paul Dispatch* expressed the hope that the city would not get the same reputation for circus failures. In the event it did not, but the local press was fascinated by the failure on its doorstep, and devoted many columns of newsprint to the ensuing commercial debacle.

The circus had been framed in April, 1875 near Morristown, Minnesota on a farm belonging to Daniel Scott, who owned the show. Opening day was April 24 in Centralia, Illinois. The final performance was on June 28 in St. Paul. Because of the newspaper interest there has come down to us an unusual amount of information on the disastrous season, and the participants in it.

Fayette Ludovic Robinson, famous as "Yankee" Robinson had by 1875 become one of the better-known showmen in America. Born in 1818 in Avon, New York to a shoemaker, he was in his father's shop at fourteen. In 1837 he opened his own shoemaker's venture in Medina, Michigan. This lasted but a year, and he returned home, married, and opened another shop in Danville, New York. The opportunity to go into the exhibition business presented itself to him in August, 1845, when he acquired two ten by fifteen paintings by S. C. Jones, "Baptism of Christ," and "Raising of Lazarus." He traveled

west by buggy, exhibiting as he went, until he arrived at Judge Fuller's Museum at Randolph and Dearborn in Chicago. He parked the paintings with Fuller and journeyed to St. Louis, where he worked as an actor under manager Norman Adams. Admittedly not much at acting, but better at singing and dancing, he organized a minstrel troupe, the Olympic Serenaders, in February 1846. That fall he joined June & Turner's Circus at Galena, Illinois, either alone or with the minstrels, the record isn't clear.

Robinson as pictured in his newspaper ads in the 1860s. Pfening Archives.

He remained with June & Turner for two seasons, and in 1848 set out with his wife and a musician, Charles Gilson, in a two-horse wagon presenting hall shows in small towns. They traveled from Eaton, Ohio to New Albany, Indiana, having what Robinson termed "a successful season." Late in the year they joined Thomas F. Lennox' Floating Theatre at Evansville, Indiana. The company sailed downriver and, as Robinson reported, "almost every place we stopped the throttle valve was taken out, and the boat tied up for debt." At Memphis the liens were of such an amount that Lennox lost the boat for good. They

went ashore, arranged to have a theatre in an abandoned church, and played the winter. Robinson, a clown in the nightly pantomime, had fifty-four nights as the comic singer as well. The Memphis season was a success, and ended in April, 1849.

In the spring of 1850, and through the season of 1855, Robinson continued in the tented dramatic business, using a canvas in the summer and halls in the winter. "Uncle Tom's Cabin," was one his specialties, "Sam Patch" another. It wasn't until 1856 that he had

what could be called a true circus. It was in

1852 that he first prefaced his company title with the name "Yankee," which he claimed was hung on him by friends because of his eastern accent. It was in 1856 that he hired A.

S. Burt as agent, a collaboration that lasted many years, through profit and vicissitude. Robinson prospered in the circus business, though he

could never quite relinquish the theatre aspects. All of his circuses had as part of their presentation such dramas as "Days of '76" and "Uncle Tom's Cabin."

He and A. S. Burt twice had serious differences. In 1858 these led to splitting the circus in two, though they "kissed and made up," in the words

of the *New York Clipper*, and combined again before season's end. In 1859 there was another argument, but Robinson's problems in the South pushed it into







the background. After John Brown's Raid at Harper's Ferry in October, southern sentiment rose to a point of heat wherein a showman named "Yankee" could hardly hope to prosper. He fled Charleston, South Carolina fearing mob action, and left his outfit, which he valued later at \$40,000, on the Citadel Green lot.

Determined to get back in the tented theatre business, Robinson went to a man in DeRuyter, New York, Daniel Scott. Scott had a small farm and a country store near DeRuyter, and was somewhat of a horse trader. During the 1859 season Scott had traveled with Robinson's circus with a herd of horses and several grooms, and dealt in horses as he went. Scott agreed to lease thirteen horses, harness, a carriage and a buggy to Robinson, who gave him the candy and lemonade privilege. Robinson leased another seventeen horses and a tent from Hamlin Shepard of Strawtown, Indiana, on whose farm the show had wintered in 1857 and 1858. Shepard went along as manager. Thus equipped, they set out under the title Yankee Robinson's Double Show, and had a successful season. However, they tried it again in 1861 with disastrous results, and at season's end Robinson owed Scott over \$2,000.

Since Scott owned the chattels, Robinson approached him to go out in 1862, to which the horse dealer replied that if Robinson would never again say anything to him about show business he would cancel the indebtedness. However, the Yankee finally prevailed, and they went on the road and they made money hand over fist. It was during this season that Scott bought the farm near Morristown. He didn't move there until 1867. They continued in the

same vein through 1865, "a flowing well," as Robinson termed it. The receipts in 1865 were almost a million dollars. Scott retired and received \$74,000 for his half of the show. It wasn't the attraction of the variety artists, or the perspicacity of the owners that led to this prosperity. Every circus in the country, and most of the theatres enjoyed the greatest boom in popularity from 1862 to 1865 that any had ever known. The war had ended, money was plentiful, and the public was ready to be entertained.

P. A. Older took Scott's place as investor and manager in 1866, a partnership that lasted through 1869. Robinson seems to have operated the circus himself in 1870 and 1871. Scott returned in 1871, but as a salaried employee. The Conklin brothers hired Robinson as manager in 1872, and in the fall of that year the Conklins and Robinson went to California where they formed a partnership with the great West Coast proprietor John Wilson. This arrangement lasted through May of 1873.

Buckley's Hippodrome was the great over-advertised show of 1874, and Yankee Robinson was its general superintendent. He apparently framed the outfit, a western copy of Barnum's Hippodrome, but had no investment in it. It was a financial failure, though it was on the road for the full season, going into Chicago in the fall.

The 1875 Yankee Robinson circus was

framed, as we said, at Scott's Morristown, Minnesota farm. The operating company was called Scott & Co. The total investment prior to leaving quarters was about \$30,000, principally supplied by Scott. Some of the material came from the Montgomery Queen Circus, which had left much of its overland show in Mankato, Minnesota when it went to the West Coast by rail in 1874. A circular wooden training barn was constructed on Scott's farm, and Joe Tinkham undertook the training of the ring stock. Yankee Robinson went to Rochester, New York to arrange for printing, and on to New York City to hire performers. There were twenty-five wagons, and seventy-five baggage stock.

It was, as usual, a half-circus and half-variety show. The best-known performers were the riders George and Kate Holland. They advertised a "great cotton show house," and, indeed, the tent was very large ("largest except Barnum," said the ads). By April 1, 150 workmen had gathered, and the show was transported on twenty cars to Centralia, Illinois where it opened the season on April 24.

Scott had borrowed \$2,000 from a Major H. W. Dike of Faribault to get the circus on the road, the first sign of trouble in the fiscal area. Dike was hired at \$100 a month to be assistant business manager. They weren't even underway when Scott borrowed another \$200 from Dike to get the train to the Iowa line. Then, the railroad agent wouldn't let them go from the state line to Centralia without a payment of \$950. Dike once more





anted up. He was to do this twice more before the company got to St. Paul.

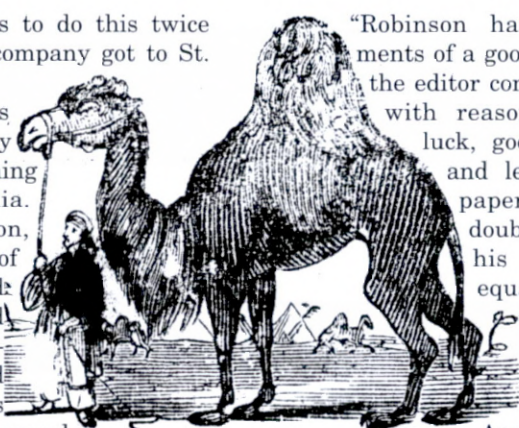
Daniel Scott was a very sick man by the time of opening day in Centralia. Yankee Robinson, who was ahead of the show, returned to find him so, and remarked he didn't think Scott had long to live. His condition so alarmed

Major Dike, and gave him such fear for the security of his loans, that he asked Scott to give him a mortgage. Scott did better than that, turning the show over to Dike. Scott left for home from Decorah, Iowa on June 7. He died three weeks later.

Scott's death was the worst of the misfortunes that befell the circus that season. The spring weather was another, it being cold and wet for the most part. The route covered parts of Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, and Wisconsin before reaching Minnesota.

Major Dike was now the owner, and there was not much money in the till. The circus had had but five winning days. The Vincennes, Indiana *Sun* of May 14 expressed the opinion that most people pronounced the show a fraud. The writer was inclined to the same belief. "While the show had a few good features, it had many bad ones," he wrote. A man trying to ride a horse with a pad fell off seven times, and the horse fell down once.

The *Pantagraph* of Bloomington, Illinois referred to Madame Cerito's Can company, which had played the town some weeks prior to Yankee Robinson's stand of May 19. It seems that the lady's posters were a bit racy for "decent people," as the newspaper had it, and the show itself was indecent. It seems that she bought a good quality of paper, as some of it was still up when the circus advance arrived, and Robinson's minions simply covered the title with its own.



"Robinson has the elements of a good company," the editor conceded, "and with reasonably good luck, good weather, and less Can-can paper, will undoubtedly make his own show equal to those he has managed in the past."

Apparently, the Bloomington public filled the seats more fully for the two performances than they had been for two consecutive shows since the season started. According to Robinson, there was plenty of whisky in the ticket wagon. He claimed later that Dike visited it often. Back wages were brought up several times by the working men, and in Stillwater, Minnesota, they threatened attachment.

Dike talked them out of it by saying they'd all be paid once they got to St. Paul on June 28. This promise proved hollow, more so when at St. Paul the Express Printing Co. of Rochester, New York, served an attachment for \$7,213.75. The printers must have ended paper shipments prior to then, which is why the show was retitling the girlie posters in Bloomington.

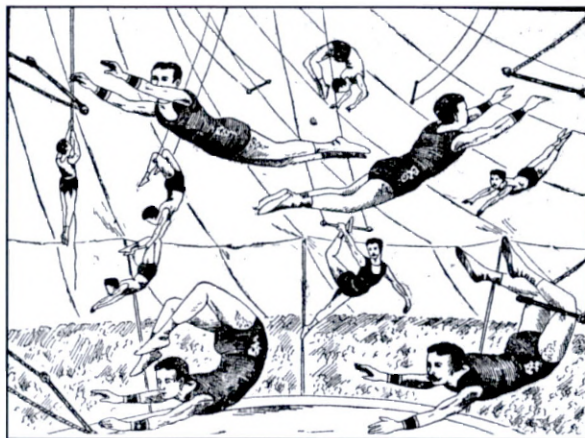
No one turned to Yankee Robinson, as he was a salaried employee of Scott & Co., and since Dike was broke, the employees talked of suing Scott's estate. On June 30 the sheriff

took possession of the circus, and stationed deputies on the lot to protect the printer's claim. Shortly thereafter, Eugene Scott, Daniel's son, and Charles S. Cooper arrived with affidavits indicating that they owned twenty-six of the horses and nine

cages and wagons that they had rented to the show for \$50 a week. The two sideshows, both independent operations, made ready to depart. Then, what had been a very interesting financial set-to became an illegal break for the county line.

George Castello, who had been Dike's assistant, and was later to be an agent for several shows and the proprietor of at least one, drove onto the lot in a buggy, gave some kind of signal, and twenty-two horses and riders bolted from the horse tent, "under whip and spur," as the *Dispatch* reporter phrased it. The deputies attempted to catch the bridles, but several of the riders, some hatless and coatless, drew revolvers, and the unarmed deputies had to relent. Castello also drew a gun before he galloped off after the show horses.

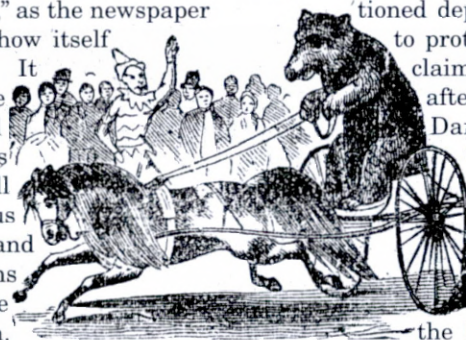
There were close to a hundred workmen milling around on June 30,



who had not eaten in two days. Fearing a riot, the Mayor of St. Paul arranged for them to be fed at the city's expense. They dispersed over the next day or two.

The reporter visited the lot after this and found the seats and tents, seven or eight baggage wagons, four Roman chariots, and two mules, the residue of "Yankee Robinson's Great Modern Show."

The background comments on Robinson's career are from the author's files. The events in St. Paul were all taken from the columns of the St. Paul *Dispatch*, in the collection of Fred Dahlinger, Jr. Steve Gossard supplied the Bloomington newspaper clippings.





# THE ORIGINAL CARSON & BARNES CIRCUS THE JACK MOORE SHOWS

## PART TWO

Fred D. Pfening, Jr.

### 1963

The 1963 season opened in Atoka, Oklahoma on April 21. The route took the show through Colorado, Wyoming, and Montana.

On June 3 the circus entered Canada at Lethbridge, Alberta. Following 38 stands in Saschatawen the show returned to the U. S. at Kenmare, North Dakota on August 2.

Stands in North Dakota, South Dakota Nebraska, Colorado and New Mexico followed. It went into Texas on September 14. It was then in Oklahoma and Arkansas where it closed in Texarkana on October 27.

The only *Amusement Business* reference to the Carson & Barnes Circus appeared in the November 9, 1963 issue: "After wintering in Hugo, Oklahoma for more than 20 years, the Al G. Barnes and Carson Combined Circus—better known as Carson & Barnes Circus—will establish new quarters at the Third District Livestock Show grounds in Hope, Arkansas.

Semi with wild animal act cages in 1963.



The walk-through marquee with free act performing in 1963. All illustrations are from the Pfening Archives unless otherwise credited.

"Announcement was made after completion of negotiations between Ned Ray Purdie, livestock show manager, and Art Miller, circus representative. The show recently completed its 63rd annual tour, termed okay by owner Jack Moore. Previously it had

used the facilities of the Kelly-Miller Circus east of Hugo.

"In addition to annual repair, replacement and refurbishing of equipment, an extensive project for the show's expansion, including new portable seating arrangements, will be worked out. The Hope site is approximately 200 miles east of Hugo, about 32 miles northwest of Texarkana on Interstate 30.

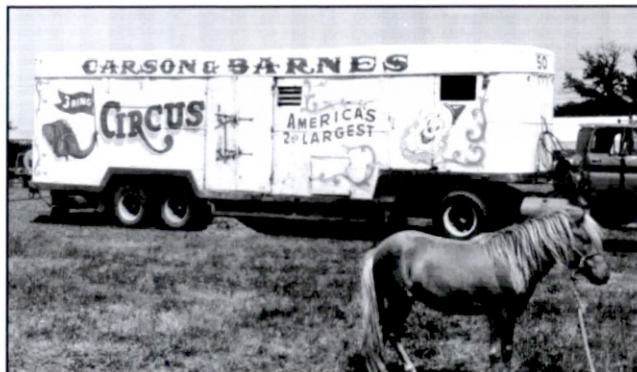
"The self-styled 'Circus Town U. S. A.' Hugo remains as winter quarters for Obert Miller's Fairyland Circus and Bob Couls' Famous Cole Circus, both of which ended their seasons last month, but news of the move within a week gave residents a jolt."

The Kelly-Miller Circus closed in Ocean Springs, Mississippi on October 31. The circus established quarters in Ocean Springs, making two losses for Hugo.

### 1964

For unknown reasons the title of the show was changed in 1964 to

Carson & Barnes elephant semi No. 50 in 1963







Back side of side show banner semi on Barnes & Bailey.



The Barnes & Bailey wild animal act was housed in this semi.

Barnes & Bailey. This caught the eye of Ringling-Barnum officials who bugged Moore to discontinue use of the title. However, the title was used through the full season.

The equipment was basically the same as in 1963. The 100-foot round with three 40-foot middles push pole big top was in its third year of use. Seating capacity was 2,500, with reserves on both sides.

Barnes & Bailey opened in Hope, Arkansas on April 23. Early stands were played in Arkansas, Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. The circus entered Iowa on at Red Oak on May 15.

The May 16 *Amusement Business* reported on the opening: "Barnes & Bailey Circus, known last season as Carson & Barnes, opened April 23 at winter quarters on the Third District Fairgrounds, Hope, Arkansas. AB's man on the scene reported the show had a light matinee but a full house at night despite torrential rains which flooded the lot.

"Next morning the show's 18 trucks drove through a steady rain to Hot Springs for a two-day stand on the Jaycee lot. Sponsored by the Sheriff's Department, stand had a heavy advance sale but rain canceled the matinee.

"A nine-passenger F-51 Sikorsky helicopter from California joined the show April 25 at Hot Springs. Midway manager Henry Fulbright contracted the copter to fly aerial banners advertising the circus and give rides at \$5 per person.

"Key personnel includes general manager Jack Moore, assistant manager Kelly Presley, superintendent Eddie Mellen, general agent Floyd

Hill, special rep Art Miller, brigade manager Frances Kitzman and C. L. (Tex) Clayton in the office.

"Other staff includes Thomas Hart, side show manager; Hank Hoover, concessions manager; Larry Fulbright, inside concessions; George Bell, musical director; Ernie Gabor, producing clown; Les Brock, electrician; Warren Lofton, transportation superintendent; Penny Moore, props.

"Pit shows include hippos, Shipley's pony sweep, mandrill ape, snakes and birds.

"Jack Moore is ringmaster under 100-foot big top with three 40-foot middles. Displays at Hope: La Fiesta spec; Jerry Presley with Wanda Moore, Gabriella Herrmann, the Herrmann Sisters (Carmen, Elizabeth and Lydia), tight wire; horses: military ponies, Henry Marcet; Ottomar Herrmann, Captain Barnes with liberty drill; clowns, hot-dog gag; elephants, Kelly Swim, Newman Noah, Richard Shipley; Gloria Noel, Carmen Brigitta, single traps.

"Jerry Presley, Gloria Noel, Wanda Hoover, Martha Moore, Gloria Swim and Claudette Georgette, aerial ladders; clowns; Herrmann's bears; Lipizzaner dressage, Gabriella and Harry Herrmann; Amazing Gonzales, trampoline; aerial ballet featuring Gloria Swim; webs; elephants worked by Richard Shipley; clowns; and Herrmann troupe, bareback riding."

"Rex Rossi's western review followed the big show with Chief White Cloud Troupe in bow and arrow shooting, knife and ax throwing, and Tex and Wanda Rossi in trick riding."

John Holley reviewed the Barnes & Bailey show in the November-December 1964 *White Tops*. A portion of his article read: "When this

writer first caught the show at Hampton, Iowa, the evening of Thursday, May 28th, the spec was preceded by a tractor commercial, but this was not seen at other performances. Here is the order of performance: Display No. 1 Spec entitled La Fiesta. All performers are in costume, a number are mounted on horses. Included in the procession is most of the lead stock and the five elephants are last in line. The elephant blankets are clean, colorful, and in good condition. 2. Instead of a candy pitch, this is a peanut pitch. Before each show the center ring is filled with many items of plush, attractively arranged on what might be a large, red elephant blanket. During the pitch the customers are encouraged to spend a quarter for a sack of peanuts which may contain a coupon good for an item of plush. It seems to work as well as the candy pitch ever did. 3. Tight wire acts in all three rings. The center ring features Carmen and Elizabeth Herrman. 4. Four Shetland ponies drill in ring one; the senior Mr. Herrman presents a single pony in ring three. The kids are tickled to watch the little pony eat from a small table with a napkin tucked under its chin. 5. Clown camera gag on the track in front of the center ring. 6. Single elephants worked in all three rings. In the center ring Richard Shipley has a big bull performing such outstanding feats as a plank walk and a head stand. Jack Moore says the bull in ring three was the first elephant he ever owned and she has been worked by every member of his family. Moore frequently works this act himself. 7. Carmen Herrman



above ring one and Elizabeth Herrman above ring three, both single traps. Carmen tops off her routine by blind-folding herself and then balancing on a ladder which is laid across the trapeze bar. The crowd screams when the ladder gives way and falls to the ground as she catches herself. As Moore says, this is pure hokum, but the crowd eats it up. 8. Four Liberty horses in the center ring worked by Jack Moore. 9. Clown walk-around with out-size comic heads. 10. Wild west concert announcement: The center ring is crowded with Chief and Mrs. Whitecloud (Pierce), Prince Chi-chi and Princess Shining Star, and a clown on a mule. Rex Rossi and his wife, Wanda, make a whirl-wind entrance on their horses, stopping in front of the long side reserves. 11. Swinging ladders in all three rings, entitled 'Winter Wonderland.' Each of the end rings contains a double swinging ladder and the center ring contains a single swinging ladder. The Winter Wonderland motif has to do with the light blue, fur-trimmed costumes of the girls. They wear matching fur trimmed caps and carry fur muffs. The girl in the center ring is Claudette Gireaux, who doubles as one of the bally girls in the side show. 12. Trained bear presented by Elizabeth Herrman. Bear drinks from a bottle, slides down a children's playground slide, and does front roll-over somersaults. Act is well sold and well styled. Occupies center ring. 13. In the center ring, a clown boxing match. Ernie Gabor and John Baumis are the antagonists and Phyllis Baumis is the lady referee. The equestrian director on the mike livens this act up considerably with his vivid description of the goings-on. 14. Richard Shipley presents three bulls in the center ring. It is a standard elephant routine, well presented. One of the girls dresses it up. 15. In the center ring, the littlest Herrman daughter rides a trick horse through a series of simple stunts. For safety's sake, the horse is kept on a long leash. 16. Harry Herrman abandons his trumpet in the band and presents a fine dressage act in the center ring, wearing

the traditional black Spanish costume. He rides a beautiful white horse which is introduced as a Lippizaner, with reference to the Walt Disney movie. Finish of the act is presented on the track where the horse does a particularly difficult leaping stunt. 17. Spanish web acts in the end rings. In the center ring, Gloria Swim presents a fine iron-jaw routine. For her finish she attaches a device to her mouthpiece hook which expands into colorful flags of several

get. Then Prince ChiChi throws his set of knives at Princess Shining Star as she assumes several different positions against the large round wooden target. Everyone styles beautifully, including some fancy knife spinning and handling by Prince Chi-Chi. Climax finds the Princess mounting a whirling target. The excellence of this act cannot be overstated. The only criticism is that the customers on the short side miss most of the action. The costumes worn by these performers are exceptional. The knife-throwing act ends the show. As the customers begin to leave they are urged to stay for the wild west concert. The Indians stay in the center ring and are joined by the Rossis.

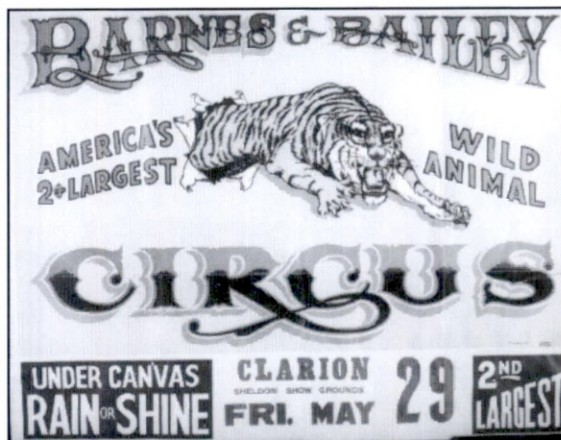
"The wild west concert presented by Rex and Wanda Rossi and by the Whitecloud family is well worth the quarter ticket. Rossi works with whips and lassoes and ends with some sensational roping. After the Rossis are finished, Prince Chi-Chi

takes over to prove that he is just as handy at trick shooting as he is with knives.

"The announcing and equestrian director chores are handled by Jack Moore, who gets the acts in and out of the big top promptly without the use of a whistle. The announcements are lively and help the show to move at a fast pace.

"George Bell is the band leader. At Hampton, Iowa, George had an organist and a drummer (apparently a Mother daughter team), Harry Herrman on a second trumpet and PeeWee Whitaker on trombone. The band cut the show nicely. That very night the organist and drummer blew the show. At Oelwein and Independence the band consisted of George Bell, trumpet and leader; Happy Jack Davis, drums; PeeWee Whitaker, trombone; and Harry Herrman, trumpet. Through no fault of their own, the band was having trouble cutting the show. At several intervals phonograph records were being used for music. Davis and Whitaker also acted as a 2-man band in the side show.

"Not long before the end of the big show, side show manager Tom Hart



Special title bill printed by Acme Printing Company for the 1964 season. Circus World Museum collection.

nations as her whirling body makes the device spin. 18. Clown firecracker gag in center ring. 19. The Herrman family in a bare-back riding act. Harry Herrman does some fine straight riding, and another member of the family does comedy in a fright wig. 20. On the track this is the beginning of the Western Spectacle. Rex and Wanda Rossi make a fast entrance on their horses and then proceed to do various dangerous riding stunts at a full gallop commencing at one end of the track and ending at the other end of the track. Both of the Rossis are fine performers and their act is a real crowd pleaser. 21. Prince Chi-Chi assisted by Princess Shining Star and Chief and Mrs. Whitecloud present a sensational knife-throwing act. The announcer makes reference to the fact that this act appeared on the TV program International Showtime in June of 1964, while the act was appearing in Canada. Act begins with tomahawk throwing by Chief Whitecloud with his wife as the tar-





Well decorated semi No. 26 in 1964. Circus World Museum collection.

takes over the microphone to urge the crowd to visit the side show and menagerie after the big show. Of course, before the big show begins Hart gathers the midway crowd around the side show bally platform and delivers himself of a most persuasive spiel. Hart is an old hand at the side show game. This writer first met him in the 1963 season when he was side show manager for the Beatty-Cole Circus. At the stands visited, Hart seems to bring a good portion of the midway crowd in to visit the menagerie side show.

"The side show top is a 60 with two 30 foot middle pieces. The canvas marquee is 20 x 30. Side show tickets are 35 cents and inside the customers are treated to a blade box act with a 10 cent blow-off, an electric girl act, a fire eating act, and a thoroughly convincing human pincushion act. The latter two acts are done by the same man.

"In the menagerie are the five elephants, Mable, Jocky (billed as the biggest elephant in the circus world, direct from the Ringling show), Sabu, Jennie and Suzie. There is a Barbary sheep, another sheep, three llamas, a camel, a zebu, and two miniature mules.

"In one of the semi trailer cage

The Barnes & Bailey canvas spool truck and big top pole semi.



units is a bear, three lions, another bear and a hyena. On this same truck is a small three-section cross cage containing monkeys. The other semi trailer caged unit has two bears, two African porcupines and an ocelot. There is also a cross cage

unit containing a wild boar. These semi units are part of the side show banner line. Consequently, they are spotted a few feet outside the edge of the menagerie tent. This writer found that the placement of these two semis made it difficult to see the animals in the various cage sections.

"Time did not permit this reporter to obtain a complete list of the truck numbers correlated with the contents of the trucks. However, Jack Moore provided this run-down on the way the show is loaded: two semis carry elephants; two more semis carry the caged animals displayed in the side show; one semi carries the hippopotamus midway show; another semi carries the snake pit show; another semi is the elaborately decorated entrance to the big show, and the cotton candy concession trailer as well as the popcorn and snow cone trailer are loaded in this truck; another semi hauls the seventy-five kilowatt Cummins diesel generator; two semi trailers haul seats; one straight truck hauls the canvas (spool wagon); another straight truck is the mechanic truck; a semi is used for the cook house and pie car; a pickup pulls the office trailer; another pickup pulls the wardrobe trailer (I believe this is the trailer which is also used for the electric organ and the bandstand). On the advance is one straight truck, two Ford panel trucks, and one Cadillac automobile.

"Mr. Moore's daughter, Mrs. Hank Hoover, was kind enough to supply the following information as to the staff: owner, Jack Moore; general agent, Floyd Hill; head of billing crew, Francis Kitzman; Assistant Manager, Keller Pressley;

superintendent of canvas, Eddie Mellon; superintendent of elephants, Richard Shipley; side show and menagerie manager, Thomas Hart; office manager and mail agent, Tex Clayton; electrician, Les Brock; concessions manager, Hank Hoover; producing clown, Ernie Gabor; announcer and equestrian director, Jack Moore.

"In addition to Ernie Gabor, the producing clown, the rest of the clown contingent consists of John Baumis and Phylliss Baumis. The boxing match (Display No. 13) is easily their best act.

"The show bills quite heavily. In each town visited, a good number of lithographs were seen in store windows and several attractive outside daubs were observed. The show was still using some paper bearing the Carson and Barnes title, which is a montage of a clown and elephant, with a big top entrance in the background. Paper bearing the Barnes and Bailey title is yellow background with a big tiger and the show title in blue. Date sheets are, of course, are also used.

"The show seems to exhibit in most towns without auspices or sponsorship. Phones are not used. This reporter discussed the matter of advance ticket sales by sponsoring committees with Mr. Moore. His attitude seems to be that with sufficient advertising his show can bring the crowds to the lot without having to give a percentage of each day's take to a sponsoring committee. It is probably a truism that there are as many theories for successful circus operation as there are successful circus operators. Obviously, nothing succeeds like success; and Moore seems to have devised a successful combination of flashy, well-painted equipment, a show which is set up on the lot to look big, heavy advance billing and advertising, and giving the customers their money's worth once they are inside the main tent."

The circus played thirty-six dates in Iowa and then a few in Minnesota and North Dakota. Following a stand in Hallock, Minnesota it had a six day layover before entering Canada at Winkler, Manitoba on July 6. It stayed in Canada until August 19 when it came back to the United



States at Crosby, North Dakota. The route then took the show through Montana, Wyoming, Nebraska, Colorado, Kansas, New Mexico and Texas. The season closed in Carthage, Texas on October 24.

## 1965

In 1965 the title was changed back to Carson & Barnes. Kirby "Sky King" Grant was signed as the feature attraction. The circus traveled on 25 trucks. There were 220 people on the show. Animals included nine elephants, a number of lions and tigers, a hippo, and four camels. The circus opened in Hugo on April 18. Floyd Hill was the general agent with Art Miller assisting in the booking. Francis Kitzman returned as bill car manager, with eight men on the advance advertising crew. Keller Pressley was general superintendent.

A newspaper courier issued for the stand in Paris, Texas on April 19 advertised the Hugo Zacchini cannon with the "first lady astronaut" as a free attraction. It is not known how



The Carson & Barnes big top in 1965. Circus World Museum collection.

long the Zacchini act remained with the circus.

This article appeared in the Hugo *Dailey News* prior to the opening: "The 1965 premier of Jack Moore's Carson & Barnes Circus will be on Easter Sunday afternoon, April 18, at the Choctaw County fairgrounds.

"Entertainment will be staged in three 40-foot rings under a 110-foot wide, 300-foot long big top, second largest in size to the Clyde Beatty show.

"Headlining this season's cast will be the widely-known 'Sky King,' television star, who appears in an adventure series each Saturday morning on Channel 4.

"When Sky King arrives aboard,

his special Cessna 310, known as *The Song Bird*, he will be greeted by local officials and dignitaries.

"In addition to the Moore family, Jack and Ann Moore, their son-in-law and daughter, Mr. and Mrs. Hank Hoover, many of the circus personnel will include a number of persons who have become well-known to local residents during the years they have lived in Hugo.

"Floyd 'Breezy' Hill is the general representative for the show, with Art Miller assisting with booking and publicity chores; Francis Kitzman is returning for his ninth consecutive year and will have a crew of eight advertising men.

"Sam Price is Carson & Barnes' 24 hour man and purchasing agent; Frank Ellis is legal adjuster; George Bell is band leader; Lee Bradley will be in the concessions department, and, Harry Dann will serve as big show announcer.

"Included among the features in Moore's expanded show will be Keller Pressley, general superintendent and his wife, who will be featured in tight wire numbers and appears with the elephants; Mr. and Mrs. Johnnie Frazer; Mr. and Mrs. Dale Madden Sr.; Mr. and Mrs. Madden Jr.; Mrs. Lee Bradley, bare-back rider; Alphonso Loyal, in a riding act; Richard Shipley, elephant trainer and clown alley will include Shorty and Peggy Sylvester and Lou Walton.

"As a prelude to the Sunday afternoon show, April 18, a death defying free act will be staged Saturday afternoon in the downtown Hugo area. This act will feature the origi-



Cookhouse semi No. 36 and dining top at right in 1965. Circus World Museum collection.

nal Zacchini family who will be human projectiles shot through space from the, mouth of a monster cannon.

"Following the opening here, the Carson & Barnes caravan of 220 people, 26 show owned vehicles and, many privately owned cars and trailers, along with nine elephants, a number of lions, tigers, a hippo, four camels and horses and ponies will leave winter quarters to stage the second performance in Paris, Texas on Monday, April 19.

"Performances are scheduled for about two weeks in central and South Texas, then the circus will head west and be away from Hugo until November 1."

The show moved west through Texas, New Mexico and Arizona. It was in Arden, Nevada on May 27. Fifteen stands were played in Utah, before entering Idaho at Montpelier on June 13. On July 4 the show played Dayton, Washington. It stayed in that state until July 27-28 when Portland, Oregon was played. On August 15 it went into California at

The Barnes & Bailey ticket wagon title had not been repainted early in 1965. Circus World Museum collection.





Yreka. The rest of the season was played in California.

When the show played Antioch on September 7 Jezebel, a female waltzing lion, and two other lions escaped from their cage when the truck was sideswiped by a passing truck. Sonoma and Jamaica jumped from the broken cage. An alert bridge employee raised the center of the draw bridge, trapping the animals. The two escaped into the brush and were later captured. Jezebel jumped into the river a distance of thirty-five feet. She was later found dead in the river.

The performance listing in the printed program was: "1. La Fiesta. Introducing a gorgeous processional pageant of kaleidoscope of splendor, featuring spangleland stars and performers from all parts of the world. 2. Featuring artists of the silver strand. The Presleys, tight wire, Eddie Hendricks, tight wire. 3. Demonstrating the results of long and patient efforts in the training of these-our largest animal. Miss Mable and elephant, Miss Susie and elephant. 4. Here comes the clowns, laff provoking skits and diodes. 5. Performing unbelievable feats on the swinging trapeze. Mr. Alfonso, Miss Luci. 6. Shetland ponies, canine capers, hackney horses. 7. First time under canvas ferocious fighting felines and death defying by Capt. Alfredo. 8. The Wichita Kid, western movie and T-V Star in person and his congress of rodeo stars, cowboys and cowgirls. 9. Fun makers, harlequins and jesters take over the big

Semi No. 50 still had the Barnes & Bailey title early in 1965. Circus World Museum collection.



SEE THIS Death Defying Act Absolutely Free Before Each P

THE ORIGINAL

# ZACCHINI

FIRST LADY ASTRONAUT • LOVELY ROCKETING PROJECTILE

## SHOT THROUGH SPACE

ON THE "CIRCUS GROUNDS" (WEATHER PERMITTING) EXACTLY ONE HOUR PRIOR TIMES STATED BELOW!

## PARIS

Spon.: Optimist Club (Breakfast)  
Lot: FAIRGROUNDS  
Show Time: 6 and 8 P. M.

**Mon.**  
**Apr. 19**

The 1965 newspaper courier featured the Zacchini cannon free act.

top for merry hodgepodge of merry making. Featuring Ernesto and his famous clown boxing match. 10. The Robys, amazing acrobatic feats, Senor Loyal, juggling artist supreme. 11. Ladder aerial display-astounding beautiful girls-sensational. Miss Rose. Miss Rebecca, Miss Darlene, Miss Patricia, Miss Linda, Miss Flo. 12. Presenting Lovely Lois Madden with the amazing 'Mr. Muggs' Television chimpanzee star. 13: Here come the crazy klowns. The Sylvesters and Harry Dean. 14. On the hippodrome track and rings-superbly trained high school horses. Jerry Presley, riding Starnight, manage; Don Ricardo, riding Golden Sun, dressage; Yvone, riding White Beauty, manage. 15. Performing elephants under the direction of Col. Richard Shipley, America's foremost elephant trainer with Miss Martha Moore, stylist. 16. An amazing constellation of famous aerialists. Becky, Spanish web, Miss Jerri of Sweden, Girl in the Moon, Miss Linda, Spanish web. 17. Capt. Barnes and beautiful matched Morgan horses presented at liberty. 18. The Von Loos Gorilla Parody. 19. Bareback riding-combining beauty and rhythm with feats of daring on the back of galloping horses. Luci from Italy, Alfonso Loyal internationally known clown. 20. From CBS TV here in person—The Star of the Circus. Kirby 'Sky King' Grant. 21. Finale western spectacle. Don Ricardo and Linda, wizards of the bull whips."

Carson & Barnes closed the season in Brawley, California on October 18 and went into quar-

ters at the California Mid-Winter fair grounds at Imperial. Total mileage for the season was 8,951 miles.

### 1966

The 1966 season opened in El Centro, California on April 2.

The show had the west coast territory to itself as the only circus in the area. Charles Mason was general agent. Floyd "Brezzey" Hill was press agent. Kirby "Sky King" Grant was again the feature attraction.

In an interesting turn of events the old big top, a 110 round with three 40s was traded to Louis Goebel for two lions. So the circus used an 85 foot round with three 40s during the early weeks of the season. A new 120-foot round with three 50s from U. S. Tent & Awning was received in Las Vegas on May 1.

The April 9 *Amusement Business* reported: "Carson & Barnes Circus opened its 1966 season Saturday (2) in El Centro, California, with six other dates in San Diego County to follow. On the route were Santee (4), Chula Vista (5) Imperial Beach (6), Escondido (7), Vista (9) and San Clemente (10).

"Returning for the second year as a name attraction with the show is Kirby Grant, TV's 'Sky King,' backed by 'Big Frank' Dean, veteran movie heavy. Circus is carrying 65 animals, including six elephants, 10 lions, 14 performing horses and ponies, and a hippo.

"Carson & Barnes is giving two performances Monday through Friday at 6 and 8 p.m., Saturday shows at 2:30 and 8 p.m., and a Sunday matinee only at 2:30."

The April 30 *Amusement Business* reported: "Jack Moore advertises the Carson & Barnes Circus he owns and manages as only second. And in this position, he has come up with a strong show for the type and area he will play. Undoubtedly Moore is trying harder.

"The circus opened on the grounds of the California Mid-Winter Fair, where it wintered, in Imperial on April 2 with a dress rehearsal. Two performances pulled half to three-quarter houses each. Actual



route started April 4 in the San Diego region with Orange and Los Angeles counties' dates more recently. Business has been steady at a fair level and extra go early in the week, starting April 10 tapering off a little later on.

"Moore does not pretend to have a gigantic show. It's just a good circus and one with all the tanbark nostalgia so hard to find these days. The show is well paced and clown Harry Dann as announcer helps the tightness.

"The publicity draw is Kirby (Sky King) Grant, who makes two appearances and autographs photos pitched, at a quarter each following the show. The kids line up in droves for the signature. His comedy pistol target shooting and vocals are entertaining.

"Alfredo Borillios' nine-lion act is near the opening and gets the performance off to a good start. The pace is kept steady by the Dale Petross liberty act, the wire work of Eddie Hendricks, Jerry Presley and Maurice Marmolejo. Single traps by the Loyals, Luci and Alfredo, is strong as is the ring work by the Wrights. Frank and Bernice Dean win a lot of friends with their expert whip-cracking turn and Hendricks (caught at Imperial but not Buena Park) with his well trained poodles get good hands.

"C&B's clowns are exceptional—they're funny. Dann and Shorty Sylvester are excellent pantomimist with their baseball game. The 'Bat Man' sequence is, too, good for a hearty laugh from young and old. Eddi Cole and Mike Minelli lend solid support.

"The five-elephant turn expertly handled by Richard Shipley is exceptionally fine. It could be dressed up a bit however. The male duo Tabak team of balancing and knock-about is well received. The Nulls play a good show and do well on the cues.

"At this point of the route, C & B is using a big top 90 foot with three 40 foot middles. A new top 120 foot with three 50-foot middles is on order from U.S. Tent & Awning and will be delivered in Las Vegas, Nevada.



Sky King autographed this photo after each performance.

"Personnel includes, in addition to Moore, Henry Fulbright, legal adjuster; Billy Griffin, office; Henry Hoover, concessions; Tex Clayton front door; Frank Ellis, banners; Floyd Hill, press; Billy Sheets, brigade (7) and Charles (Curly) Mason, general agent. Lee Bradley has the novelties: Fulbright, the snake show; Ellis, the gorilla show, and Joe Colby, the pitch."

Doug Lyon reported the normal midway setup featured the Gorilla pit show on the left front end; next was Dick Shipley's pony ride; the ticket wagon and the snake pit show.

At the other end of the midway was the marquee semi; with the midway dinner, semi-cage 30 and semi-trailer cage 31 as the side show bannerline, with the menagerie marquee in between. Concession stands selling novelties, cotton candy and

The well decorated hippo semi in 1966.



popcorn were in the middle of the midway.

Lyon reported the rolling stock as:

1. No. 54, straight truck, canvas spool. Red and white.
2. Trailer carrying Catapiller with stake driver. Pulled by No. 54. Red.
3. Straight bed truck, arena and props. Red.
4. Trailer carrying four small cages. Pulled by arena truck.
5. Pickup truck, water wagon. Red.
6. No. 1. trailer, ticket and office wagon. Pulled by water pick up truck.
7. No. 29 -s- Big top poles and seats. White
8. No. 33 -s- Seat Planks and chairs. Red.
9. No. 11 -s- Light plant and sleeper. Red and White.
10. No. 50 Horses, llama, and camel. White.
11. No. 51 Elephants. Red.
12. No. 32 -s- Hippo pit show. Red. Formally on Cristiani Bros.
13. No. 30 Cages with bannerline. White.
14. No. 31 Bear cages with bannerline. White.
15. No. 36 Entrance marquee and sleeper. The tractor had stake driver mounted on it. Red and white.
16. Straight bed Cookhouse truck. White.
17. Trailer Midway diner and cookhouse. Pulled by cookhouse truck. White.
18. Trailer Cage and stakes.

The snake pit show was owned by Henry Fuller and the gorilla pit show was owned by Frank Ellis. One cage semi with the bannerline was once on Dailey Bros. The other semi cage had been on the C. R. Montgomery circus.

The five elephants in the menagerie-side show were Joskey, Mabel, Susie, Lydia, and Sadie. Other animals were a bear, a lion, a tiger, a leopard, monkeys, a goat, two sheep, a hippo, two llamas and a camel.

The first week's stands were in the San Diego area. By April 29 the show was in Nevada at Henderdson. On May 13 the show entered Idaho at Twin Falls and remained in that state until



May 30 when the show was in Newport, Washington. Twenty stands were played in Washington before going into British Columbia on June 20 at Oliver. Carson & Barnes played Alberta and Saskasawen through August 18 when it came back to the U. S. at Crosby, North Dakota. Montana, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma followed with the closing stand in Durant, Oklahoma on September 27.

Newspaper ad used in 1966.

The 1966 performance as listed in the program: "1. LaFiesta. Introducing a gorgeous processional pageant of kaleidoscopic splendor. Featuring spangeland stars and performers from around the world. 2. Hackney Horses. Capt. Barnes and beautiful matched Morgan horses presented at liberty. 3. Chills and thrills. Joe Wright, astounding mid-air achievements on the Roman rigs. The Deans, wizards with Australian whips. 4. Here come the clowns with laff provoking skits and diodes. 5. Alfredo Brillo fighting with his cage full of snarling, reluctant, trained but untamed jungle born African lions (7). 6. Shetland ponies in a military drill. Angorian goats, clowns of the animal world. 7. Performing unbelievable feats on the swinging trapeze. Miss Gloria and Miss Jo Ann. 8. Ernesto and his famous clown capers. 9. Jerry Presley, tight wire. Senior Marmelejo, artist of the silver strand. Ed Hendricks, tight wire. 10. Western spectacle with Frank Dean, Hollywood star of western movies. Knife throwing at spinning human targets. Trick riding on the hippodrome track. 11. Introducing the star

**MOBERLY**  
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Shows 4 and 8 p.m. - Auspices Kiwanis  
1500 GEN. ADM. SEATS  
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**MONARCH OF THE "BIG TOPS"**  
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CAGE AFTER CAGE OF RARE ANIMALS FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD  
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**COMPLETE FUNTASTIC PROGRAM**  
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TRULY A SHOW FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY

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**SPECIAL ADDED ATTRACTION!**  
**— IN PERSON —**  
DIRECT FROM CBS NETWORK  
CBS-TV STAR  
KIRBY "SKY KING" GRANT

of the circus, Kirby 'Sky King' Grant, CBS-TV star. 12. Three rings of elephants. Mabel, Susie, Sabu. 13. An amazing constellation of famous aerialists. Miss Linda, Spanish web; Miss Carmelita, Spanish web; Seniorita Gloria, hairlift; Miss Rose, Spanish web; Miss Becky, Spanish web. 14. Ernie and his clowns with laughable pranks. 15. Superbly trained high school horses on the hippodrome track and rings. Mr. Roberto, riding Starnight (manage); Dale Petros, riding Golden Sun (dressage); Billy Smith, riding Tan Beauty (manage). 16. Performing elephants under the direction of Richard Shipley. Martha Moore, stylists. 17. Clown baseball game with Shorty Sylvester. 18. Kanine Kapers. Eddie's poodles; Rosie's pets. 19. The Loyal Troupe. Graceful bareback riding. 20. Grand Finale, I love a circus."

The show closed in Durant, Oklahoma on September 26 and returned to quarters in Hugo. Mileage for the season was 9,854.

#### 1967

The 1967 season opened in Sherman-Denison, Texas with a two day stand on April 1 and 2. New to the show was a walk-through entrance to the big top replacing the traditional marquee. The Aerial Chapmans presented a comedy routine free act using a revolving ladder and a small trapeze above the semi-trailer entrance marquee. Enoch Bradford, the boss canvasman, was in charge of a 120-foot big top with three 40s. Color is blue and white with red trim. It was reported that the tent, new to Carson & Barnes, had seen service on Kelly-Miller. The

semi-trailer cage bannerline trucks were replaced with canvas banners, in front of a 60-foot round with two 30s menagerie-side show top.

The April 22 *Amusement Business* reported on the opening: "Carson & Barnes Circus opening of the 1967 season on April 1 at Sherman, Texas with a two-day stand where the show played to one half-full and two three-quarter full houses, according to owner Jack Moore. The show expected to play to top business in northeast Texas April 3-10, playing Denton, Richardson, Garland, Mt. Pleasant, Atlanta and Texarkana. Routine calls for 6 and 9 p.m. shows daily, but advance sales at Garland required a matinee. Tickets are \$2, adults; \$1 for kids; 75 cents for reserves. Pit shows are 25 cents. The side show is 50 cents at opening.

"Owner Jack Moore says he will periodically join the show during the season, leaving Johnny Frazier to handle equipment and personnel and Charles (Chuck) Fuller in charge of the front end and performances. Angela Moore is secretary-treasurer. Charles Mason is general agent and Floyd Hill, publicist.

"Personnel and areas of responsibility include Frank Ellis, local and national advertising and pit shows; Larry Smith, canvas boss; Les Brode electrician; Warren Loflin, transportation; Penny Moore, boss props; Henry Hoover, concession manager; Arch Merritt, brigade agent with five men; Jack Knight, 24 hour man; Wanda Hoover and Hazel Frazier, front door; Donald Null Trio with organ, drums and horn; Richard Shipley, elephant superintendent; Dale Petross, ring stock; Bob Barker, grandstands; Leila Fuller, press-radio.

"Displays announced by Harry Dann included: grand entry; equestrians in three rings, Karen Carr, dressage; Bob Grubbs and Dale Petros, menage; Spanish webs with Luci Loyal, Rosie Wright, Sarah Chapman and Joyce Canistrelli, featuring Pete and Grace Ivanov in the Bat; clowns, Harry Dann, Danny Chapman, Shorty Sylvester and John Seaton, boxing gag; caged lions, Don de Carr; Pietro and Joyce Canistrelli, roly-poly; John Frazier, tight wire; Joe and Rosie Wright,



Roman rings; Alfonso Loyal, juggling; clown baseball; elephant single in each ring with girls; Jungle Drums on hippodrome track; Pete Ivanov troupe, plates; Rosie Wright, dogs; Wayne Newman and Bob Grubbs, ponies; Sky King (Kirby Grant) with assist from Shorty Sylvester in pistol shooting and Null Trio in singing; Canistrelli's hanging perch; clowns, paint gag; Loyal Troupe, bareback riding; Amazing Pietros (Canistrelli's), foot juggled ladder; aerial trapezes (singles) by Alfonso and Luci Loyal and Sarah Chapman; liberty horse drills (2), Dale Petross and Bob Grubbs; clowns; Newmans' Bears (2) (Wayne and Marge); salute to & Navy, flying perch (6 girls on anchors); elephants, Col. Richard Shipley and Martha Moore; and grand finale reprise of performers to center ring with Sky King singing *I Love a Circus*.

"Seven acts plus animals are in the side show, managed by Chuck Fuller. Ticket sellers are Joe Wright, Kelly Swim and Lee Fuller. Cliff King is second is second talker to Fuller. Animals in side show included 5 elephants, hippo, 2 llamas, camel, 3 caracut sheep, 3 lions (there were 13 on the show), 4 bears, hyena, tiger leopard, cotamundi, midget pony, cage of assorted monkeys.

"Front end personnel included Billy Griffin, office manager and tickets. Pit shows, Sealo, with Dave Mullaney on front; ape show owned by Frank Ellis with Bob Grubbs on front; Richard Shipley, pony ride; Torchy Townsend, jewelry; Joe Colby, outside concession; Lee Bradley, novelties; Henry Hoover, manager concessions with Arizona (Red) Hughes, corn; John Roy, floss; Tennessee Davis, snow and apples; Ray Cutty, inside; and George 'Sweet Thing' Curry, side show peanuts.

John Holley, in the March-April 1986, *White Tops*, reported the side show as being, "the largest group of side show talent I have seen on a circus touring Iowa in recent years." Side show manager Chuck Fuller's lineup included midgets Cliff and Mamie King; Vernon Goin, tattooed man; Jack Smith, bagpipe artist; Pietro and Joyce

Canistrelli, knife throwing act; Celeste, electric chair illusion; and Joyce Canistrelli, blade box. Kid show tickets went for fifty cents. The hippo was presented at an extra charge.

Holley continued, "A number of animals were exhibited in the side show. Three small cages contained two lions and a coatimundi. A large cage housed a tiger, a jaguar, a male lion, a female lion, a bear, a hyena and a second bear. Another small cage contained monkeys. Another large cage housed four bears. There was also a camel, two llamas, a guanaco and five elephants.

"Just inside the big top was a large refreshment stand operated by Ray Cuddy. His continuous chant that nothing would be sold after the show started garnered a lot of customers on their way to their seats. This claim was not strictly true. But there was a noticeable shortage of butchers working the seats for a show of this size.

"Big seating capacity was pegged at 2,000. On the long side were seven sections of blue and white painted grandstand chairs, seven high. The general admission seats at both ends of the tent were eight high planks painted red. There was no seating on the short side. The reserved seat section had red and blue masking. curbs for the end rings were made of small, lightweight wooden sections. The center ring curb was metal. Almost directly behind the center ring was the small steel arena erected for the cat act. The closed, unlettered semi

One of two Sky King posters used by Carson & Barnes.

which carried the big cats was spotted just outside the big tent with the usual caged tunnel leading directly to the arena.

"The big top was well-lighted by means of a six bulb chandelier mounted on each of the two interior center poles and a six bulb, long, rectangular fixture on each of the end center poles. Additionally, banks of floodlights were mounted above the reserves and aimed at the rings. These were used to good advantage from time to time during the performance to highlight various acts.

"The performance began with an introduction by Harry Dann, equestrian director, who handled the announcing chores in a superb manner and kept the show moving at a good pace. He stated that our national colors were about to be presented and cautioned the crowd that it was not necessary to come to its feet in the canvas auditorium. The whistle blew, and Bob Grubbs on horseback took the colors around the track at a gallop.

"Next came the peanut prize pitch with a flashy display of plush placed in the center ring. After the butchers had been given a reasonable amount of time to separate the customers from their twenty-five cent pieces for this purpose, the show really got under way with what probably should be labeled Display No. 3. An elephant in each ring. Worked respectively by Richard Shipley, Wayne Newman and Whitey. Dancing on the track in front of the reserves were Sarah Chapman, Roxie Null, Luci Loyal and Rosie Wright. The girls wore feather costumes and the men were dressed as turbaned maharajas. I was told that the wardrobe had previously been used on the Gil Gray Circus in a spec called Jungle Drums. 4. Rosie Wright and Luci Loyal in a routine web number in each end ring. 5. Pietro and Joyce Canistrelli presented a fine act which began on an unsupported ladder and ended with a foot perch, in the center ring. 6. John Richards worked seven lions in the steel arena. This was a good, fast-paced act. High-





lights were putting a lion through a flaming hoop and making the big cats race around the arena until they were cued into the tunnel, one by one. 7. The Ivanovs—one of the best novelty aerial acts I have seen. The duo entered center ring to the 'Batman' theme. He was masked and wearing a cape. She was in red with black boots. At the top of the chrome rigging was a bar where the man worked, and the woman worked on a bar a few feet below. After the woman (Grace Ivanov) did a standing spin, from the top bar, the act was climaxed by a giant swing, or loop-the-loop performed by Pete Ivanov. This was a real crowd pleaser. 8. Clown boxing match with Danny Chapman and John Seaton as the combatants and Shorty Sylvester as the referee. Although there is nothing new about a clown boxing gag, the boys put this on with a flourish, and they milked it for laughs. Presented in ring one. 9. Ring one had Alfonso Loyal balancing on a single trap. Ring three had the Canistrellis on the hanging perch. On the track in front of the blues, near ring three, Joe and Rosie Wright presented acrobatics on roman rings rigged close to the ground. 10. In the center ring TV star Sky King (Kirby Grant). Dressed in a sky blue western outfit with a white ten gallon hat and packing a pistol, Grant began his stint with a few words about the pleasure he derives from being able to perform for live audiences. Working with a microphone he then showed off a mellow baritone with a rousing audience-participation song, *Ringo--Rango*. Next he introduced his sidekick, 'High-pockets' (midget clown, Shorty Sylvester) and this led into a comedy routine involving miraculous but phony sharpshooting with the pistol.

"The routine provided an excuse for a few serious words to the youngsters about gun safety. Grant then bowed off with a fine rendition of *Along The Navajo Trail*. Sky King's act ran about twelve minutes, in all, and was well received at every performance. 11. Pete Ivanov in the center ring as 'Pedro The Chef' in a plate

spinning act, assisted by his wife. Good comedy. 12. Four liberty horses in rings one and three presented by Dale Petross and Bob Grubbs, with four liberty Shetland ponies in the center ring presented by Wayne Newman. At the shows I caught the Petross act was not worked because a truck breakdown had left him several days behind the show. 13. In the center ring clowns Danny Chapman, John Seaton and Shorty Sylvester pantomimed the troubles of a group of incompetent paper hangers. The timing of the comic series of catastrophes which befell these three was exquisite. The act has to be seen more than once to be fully appreciated. 14. Roxie Null and Luci Loyal in rings one and three, dressed in sailor outfits, on swinging ladders. (I was told that the show owned some large, wooden anchors on which this routine was presented, but the ladders were used at each show I caught.) 15. In ring one, the Canistrellis wherein a drunk came into the ring and began to juggle, and later removed the drunk costume and performed roly-boly. On the track in front of the center ring John Frazier treated the customers to some fancy rope spinning. In ring three Alfonso Loyal exhibited his ball juggling prowess. 16. Brought Sarah Chapman in the center ring for a beautiful balancing act on a single trapeze. 17. In ring one, Wayne Newman and his wife presented two trained bears. In ring three, Joe and Rosie Wright presented trained dogs. Both acts were nicely costumed. 18. In the center ring, the Riding Loyals, Alfonso and Luci, in a polished bareback riding exhibition. 19. Finale.

John Richards worked the cat act in 1967.



bition. 19. Finale.

This was staged much like those of European circuses seen on television. Sky King, mike in hand, was in the center ring to thank the audience for its patronage. Then he sang *I Love A Circus* while four bulls did a long mount on the track behind him and the rest of the troupe filled the three rings, clapping in time to the music. Soon the audience was clapping, too, and all this made for a strong finish.

"The performance varied considerably on the three different days I spent on the show. The cat act did not work every show. On one occasion, Richard Shipley presented a three bull routine in center ring, in addition to the three one elephant routines mentioned above. John Frazier did not spin his ropes at every show.

"No after show was given but what was probably an even more lucrative gimmick was employed. Right after Sky King's act it was announced that an 'autograph party' would be held in center ring immediately following the show. Then the butchers hawked 7 x 9 inch photos (at \$2.50 each) suitable for autographing. After each show Grant set up in the autographing business on a card table in one of the rings and the moppets lined up by the score to get those pics signed. Grant had a nice way with the youngsters and he had a smile and a gracious word for each one."

The 1967 route took the show through the high grass territory of Texas, Arkansas, Missouri, Iowa, Minnesota and South Dakota. By July 7 it was in Wisconsin at Ashland. It crossed into Michigan at Escanaba and stayed in that state until dropping into Indiana at Garrett. Kentucky and Tennessee stands took the circus to Mississippi and Louisiana. It closed in Pittsburg, Texas on September 30. Mileage for the season was 8,101.

#### 1968

In 1968 Carson & Barnes had all new canvas. Three elephants from Kelly-Miller joined the herd.

*Amusement Business* published this report in the May 25, 1968 issue: "Carson & Barnes Circus opened its sea-



son to mud and stormy weather on five of its first seven stands, but proved it can win money when weather permits. Performance is adequate, two of the three main tents are new, and a 'no reserved seats' policy is used this year.

"From Hugo, Oklahoma quarters the show moved across the Red River to debut in Paris, Texas. Opening was on a muddy fairgrounds during a minor flood. It stayed wet for days but the week was a winner.

"Seven elephants were with it with an eighth, a young one, already bought and due to arrive from Los Angeles. The menagerie, in a separate tent, is free this year.

"Two more mechanical seat wagons were to be added in New Mexico, upping the seating capacity to about 3,000. They are being overhauled in quarters, owner Jack Moore said. The new tents got a mudbath: A 90-foot round with three 40-foot middle pieces for the main show, and a 60 with two 30's for the side show. Menagerie is a 60 with two 40's, a holdover from last season.

"The front end holds three mobile pit shows--Frank Ellis' Gorilla show, and the show's snakes, managed by Joe King, and turtles, run by John Roy. Also, Richard Shipley, pony sweep; Whitey and Gladys Black, jewelry and novelties; Henry Hoover with crew of six, privilege car and diner.

"Texarkana fairgrounds business was okay despite rain. Tyler drew fair weather and good turnouts; Jacksonville was dry, with one full and one straw house; Garland was big, helped by a large phone promotion by sponsoring police.

"Display 1. Single elephants worked by Richard Shipley, Wayne Newman and John Carroll; 2. Webs, Rosie Wright, Jo Ann Jennier, Lucianna Loyal, Chello Estrada, Judy Plunkett; 3. Peter Flores in head-balancing trapeze; 4. Lions (8) worked by John Richards; 5. Pony drills worked by Wayne Newman and Jimmy Conners; 6. Sky King (Kirby Grant); 7. Jo Ann Jennier, contortion; EE stradas, hand balancing; Alfonso Loyal, juggling; 8. Clown baseball, Shorty Sylvester and Harry Dann; 9.



Sky King and Alfonzo Loyal in 1968.

Aerial anchors, Kathy Fuller, Judy Plunkett, Lucianna Loyal, Rosie Wright and Jo Ann Jennier; 10. Perch, Estrada brothers; hand balancing, Peter Flores; 11. Clowns; 12. Wayne and Marge Newman's bears; 13. Bareback riding, Alfonso Loyal troupe; 14. Dogs, Jimmy Conners and Rosie Wright; 15. Risley (foot juggling), Estrada Troupe; 16. Single trapeze, Jo Ann Jennier; 17. Elephants, John Carroll and Richard Shipley; 18. Finale, featuring all performers, with Sky King singing.

"Acts not working when visited include a six-horse liberty act by Donald Carr, with animals from former Kelly-Miller and Carson & Barnes acts; a center-ring illusion act by Don Bridwell to be put in before leaving Texas, and the Plunkett Family trampoline act, out while James Christy Plunkett recovered from an emergency appendectomy.

"Staff: Jack Moore, owner; D. R. Miller, director; Angela Moore, treasurer; Charles Fuller, manager; Corky Plunkett, superintendent, Robert Estridge, electrician, with Shorty Collins, assistant; George Powell, big top, with Arthur Shields, assistant; Richard Shipley, elephant superintendent, with John Carroll, Max Gross, Newman Noah, and Larry Rogers, assistants; Penny Moore, boss props; Billy Griffin, office; Donald Null, band director with five musicians; Harry Dann, equestrian director and announcer; Don Bridwell, producing clown and illusion; Warren Loftin, chief mechanic; Les Brock, transportation manager; Bob Grubbs, superintendent of

menagerie; James Conner, ring stock superintendent; Clifton King, side show manager; Andy Kirk, manager of hippopotamus exhibit; Kelly Swim, purchasing agent; June Plunkett, concessions manager with crew of eight; and front door, Connie Wycoff and Floria Swim.

"Advance: Charles Mason, general agent; Joseph Wright, special agent; Floyd Hill, director of publicity, press and TV; and Claude Poe, brigade manager, with seven men and one woman in his crew. Press on the show is handled by Leila Fuller."

The route took the show through Texas, Arizona, California, Oregon and Washington. It entered Canada at Esquimalt, British Columbia on July 1 and stayed in that province until August 8 when it went to Alberta. On August 30 the circus returned to the United States at Cut Bank, Montana. The rest of the season was spent in Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, Texas and Oklahoma.

The season ended at Frederick, Oklahoma with a matinee only on October 6. The mileage for the long season was 10,496.

After the season closed Richard Shipley and a three-elephant act worked the Gil Gray free circus at the Texas state fair from October 5 to 20.

Dave Price remembered his last visit with Jack Moore: "The last time I visited the show and talked to Jack was in 1968 at Taylor, Texas. I was actually on the way to Mineral Wells when I saw the arrows and I just followed them to the lot. The first person I ran into was Frank Ellis, who told me that Jack was back in his trailer and not well at all but would enjoy seeing me. I went back and we had a nice visit and Jack asked all about what I was doing at the time. I never saw him again. Jack Moore was in poor health that had started during the 1967 season. He traveled with the show but remained in his trailer most of the time. D. R. Miller stepped in as manager handling the day to day operation. The Kelly-Miller circus was under lease to Joe MacMahon at the time. At the end of the 1968 season Miller reclaimed the Kelly-Miller property."



## 1969

The 1968 season was Jack Moore's last. He died in Hugo on March 15, 1969 at age fifty, following a long illness that began in 1967.

It was a turn-around year for D. R. Miller, following tax problems and the loss of his boat circus.

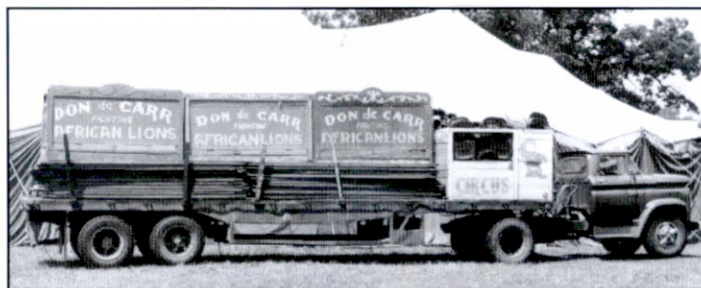
A very important contribution to the success of the 1969 season was the signing of Howard W. Arhart as general agent. Arhart came on board in December of 1968 and began booking the Carson & Barnes Circus at once. He was well known as the designer of the so-called Mills Bros. Circus sponsor contract. He delivered the goods for Miller and received \$44,800 for the season. All payments to Howdy Arhart Enterprises, Inc. were made on cashier's checks drawn on the Security First National Bank of Hugo, Oklahoma.

Bill English's Greater American Entertainment Corporation was hired to handle the phone promotions. English's 5% of the phone sales for the first seventy stands totaled \$6,554.88.

A contract with the Coca Cola Company provided \$2,000 for an advertising agreement.

Acme Printing Co., of Hugo, was selected as principal supplier of lithos and heralds. A delivery of Acme paper was received on March 31 covering 2,000 half sheets of an elephant and clown design and 2,000 half sheets of a menagerie scene and 1,000 half sheets for Sky King. Total cost was \$515.00. Date sheets were bought from the Enquirer Printing Co., of Cincinnati, Ohio. Each set of dates included one hundred 9 x 42, fifty 14 x 42 panels, fifty 1/2 sheet uprights and fifty 1 sheet uprights, cost \$20. Enquirer also provided three styles of three-color window cards.

When the 1969 season opened Moore's estate still owned half of the circus. The official name of the owning corporation was Moore Equipment Co. dba Carson & Barnes Circus, Inc. Jack Moore's widow, Angela, was listed as president. Mike Moore was vice-president and Ted Bowman was secretary. Mrs.



The Don E. Carr wild animal act cages in 1968.

Moore traveled with the show and received 25% of the concession income.

Kirby Grant was again featured. For the first time in the show's history two wild animal acts were presented.

The performance was a five ring presentation. A 120-foot big top with three 40-foot middles was pulled out of storage. The tent had been on Mills Bros. Circus and had the letters MBC at the top of the middles. Rings 1 and 5 were outside the center poles.

The 1968 Carson & Barnes big top was used as a free menagerie. The 1968 Carson & Barnes side show 60-foot top was used again in 1969. Two bannerline semis from Kelly-Miller fronted the side show.

The circus was enlarged to about thirty trucks using much of the equipment that had been on Kelly-

Cover of the 1968 Carson & Barnes program.



Miller in 1968 and about all of the 1968 Carson & Barnes trucks.

The trucks were:

No. 1 Office-ticket wagon trailer. Pulled by cow show Metro van.

No. 3 1955 Reo wrecker truck, pulled

water monster pit show trailer (C & B).

No. - Stake driver-water wagon pulled menagerie equipment trailer.

No. 11 1960 Ford tractor used as an extra (C & B).

No. 15 1956 Chevrolet panel truck carrying electrical supplies pulled the rest room trailer (K-M).

No. 23 1956 Chevrolet menagerie and side show canvas spool truck pulled a trailer carrying a Catapiller tractor (K-M).

No. - 1959 International big top canvas spool truck pulled four wheeled wardrobe trailer (C & B).

No. 29 1961 Chevrolet tractor pulling the pole semi (C & B).

No. 31 1961 Chevrolet tractor pulling a seat semi (C & B).

No. 32 1961 GMC tractor pulling the hippo semi (C & B).

No. - Seat planks and chairs.

No. 33 1960 Ford tractor pulling a seat semi, with cages 70, 71, 72 and 80 (K-M).

No. 34 International tractor pulling a seat semi, with cages 73, 75, 76, and 79 (C & B).

No. - 1961 GMC tractor pulling a seat semi, with cages 77, 78 and bandwagon. (K-M).

No. 36 1960 Chevrolet tractor pulling the marquee semi (C & B).

No. 45 1958 International tractor pulling an elephant semi, side show banner front (K-M).

No. 50 1960 Chevrolet tractor pulling an elephant semi, side show banner front (C & B).

No. 51 1962 Chevrolet tractor pulling an elephant semi (C & B).

No. 54 1959 International canvas spool pulled a trailer with ramp used to carry small cages (C & B).

No. 58 1958 Chevrolet, concession truck pulled a 1960 trailer sleeper and candy stands (K-M).

No. 60 1963 Ford tractor pulling the light plant semi, containing two generators. One from Carson &



1. N. 1 ticket-office wagon
2. "Midget Cow" pit show Metro van  
(pulls above)
3. Managerie and side show canvas  
spool
4. Stake driver-water wagon
5. Trailer w. tractor & cage  
(unloading ramp)(pulled  
by above)
6. No. 29 Big top poles and seats
7. No. 32 Hippo and stock
8. No. 3 Wrecker
9. No. 60 Light plant
10. No. 36 Marquee & sleeper
11. Big top canvas spool
12. No. 14 Wardrobe trailer (pulled  
by above)
13. Stake driver-water wagon

14. Trailer- menagerie poles & sidewall
15. Reserved seat wagon
16. Reserved seat wagon
17. Reserved seat wagon
18. No. 68 Ring curb, props, animal act arenas
19. Panel truck (elec. supplies)
20. Donkeyer trailer (pulled by above)
21. Pick-up truck
22. Popcorn trailer (pulled by 22. No. 45 Elephants - side show banner)
23. Elephants & lead stock - side show banner
24. Elephant & lead stock - side show banner

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25. Elephants
26. Pie car & mid-way diner
27. Horse van
28. Seat lumber (straight truck)
29. Side snow Bally platform
    trailer
30. Jungle Monster pit show
31. Water Monster pit show
32. Mechanics truck
33. Chevy 1 ton truck
34. Novelty trailer w. sleeper on
    back (pulled by 33)
35. No 33 seat planks & chairs
36. Novelty trailer
37. Anthropoid ape show
*****
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- 50. Floss trailer
- 51. Menagerie refreshment stand
- 52. Cage #79 - bear
- 53. Cage #75 - tiger
- 54. Cage #80 - jaguar
- 55. Cage #72 - mt. lion &
- 56. Cage #70 bear
- 57. Cage #71 lions

CANVAS

- A. Big top
- B. Back door
- C. Dressing
- D. Menagerie
- E. Side show
- F. Cookhouse
- G. Pony sweep

60. Cage #77 lions  
61. Cage #78 lions  
62. Ford tractor  
63. Band trailer  
64. Cage #74

This John Goodall drawing shows the Carson & Barnes lot layout in Maywood, Illinois on June 21, 1969.

No. 68 1956 International tractor pulling ring curb, arena, and property semi (K-M).

No. 80 1960 Ford tractor pulling a horse semi.

No. - 1960 Chevrolet, water wagon and stakes, pulled officer trailer (C & B).



No. - 1960 Chevrolet, water wagon and stakes, pulled snake pit show trailer (K-M).

No. - 1954 Ford pickup; pulled a 1961 Wells Cargo trailer, turtle pit show (K-M),

No. - Four wheeled trailer carrying air calliope (K-M).

No. - Two wheeled trailer for novelties (K-M).

No. - Two wheeled trailer for concessions (K-M).

No. - Trailer side show bally platform.

No. - Trailer, ape pit show.

The Carson & Barnes trucks were licensed in the name of Moore Equipment Co., Inc. and the Kelly-Miller units were licensed to Miller Equipment Co., Inc. The trucks and trailers were licensed in Alabama at a cost of \$1,648.00.

The following animal cages, all transported in seat semis, were displayed in the menagerie:

Cage No. 70, white with red set work, Himalayan bear.

Cage No. 71, purple with red set work, A male and female lion.

Cage No. 72, pink with green scroll work, mountain lion and hyena (two compartments).

Cage No. 73, orange with blue scroll work, Don Carr's lion act, three female lions. This cage had an orange sideboard which was not lettered.

Cage No. 75, red with silver scroll work, baby tiger. A red side board had silver lettering "Don Carr Trained Wild Animals."

Cage No. 76, light green with dark green scroll work, Carr's lion act (3 females). This cage has a sideboard with silver lettering "Don Carr's Trained Wild Animals."

Cage No. 77, yellow with red scroll work. The lettering read "Capt. Fred Logan--Fighting African Lions" dark green (2 males).

Cage No. 78, dark green with silver scroll work. This cage carried the same lettering as Cage 77; however, the color was silver, carried three male lions.

Cage No. 79, silver with red scroll work, black bear.

Cage No. 80, blue with silver scroll work, jaguar.

The show carried 9 elephants, all of which performed except Lydia. Carson & Barnes' elephants were



Joskey, purchased from Ringling Bros. about 1959; Suzie, from Kelly-Miller in 1958; Mabel, from K-M in 1954; Sadie, owned by Bill Woodcock 1957-1964, joined C-B in 1965; and Lydia, whose career began on K-M in 1951, came to C-B in 1965 after being owned by Bill Woodcock from 1952-1964. In 1968 the Carson-Barnes herd was increased by the acquisition of two K-M elephants, Kay, who was a Meems and Ward import in 1949, and Hattie who came to K-M from Polack Bros. Western in 1950. These last two bulls plus Barbara did not perform on the K-M show in 1967 after their rampage through Chicago suburbs in 1966. The balance of the K-M herd, acquired from Atlantic Fertilizer Imports in May, 1955, were Mary, Minnie, and Virginia.

The May 3 *Amusement Business* covered the opening of the 1969 season: "The largest show in Carson & Barnes Circus history gave its first public performance of the season April 10 with a paid dress rehearsal for Chamber of Commerce of Hugo, Okla., show's winter quarters. A special memorial service was held before the opener for the late Jack Moore, C & B owner-operator who died March 15.

"First road stand was a Police sponsored matinee and evening date April 12 in Paris, Tex. Show reports a three-quarter afternoon house with a full evening crowd despite a three-inch rain. All dates are contracted this season, with C & B generally following the old Mills Bros.

Small cages displayed in the 1969 menagerie.

Circus route through the Southwest.

"No Sundays have been booked at least through mid-season. Show moves mornings on 30 trucks and 20 house-trailers and is equipped to parade every day in cities where the sponsor can secure necessary permits and tractors. In the opening weeks' show paraded an average of five days in the six-day week.

"Two-hour program includes 23 displays, two aerial ballets and 10 girls up for webs production and ladders. Four displays have all five rings going and another four have four going. Among features is Kirby Grant, TV's 'Sky King,' returning for the fifth year.

"Display 1. Donnie Carr and Freddy Logan, two cages of cats (5 and 6); 2. Estracelas, Canestrellis and Polo Mantecon, balancing acts; 3. Count Von Ernesto's clown car; 4. Babe Woodcock, Jimmy Connors and Wayne Newman, pony acts; 5. Logan Kids (2 units), Canestrellis, Estradas and Dino Raffles, rola-bola; 6. Kirby Grant and band; 7. Mary Jo Logan, John Carroll, Madeline Moore and Max Gross, the Logans, the Carrs, and Luci Loyal and Robert Cline, elephant acts; 8. Peter Konosh, the Three Glorias, and Canestrellis, aerialists; 9. Clown stage coach; 10. Don Carr, Babe Woodcock and Wayne Newman, horse acts; 11. Ulla Valen-

The 1969 menagerie tent was the big top on Carson & Barnes in 1968.



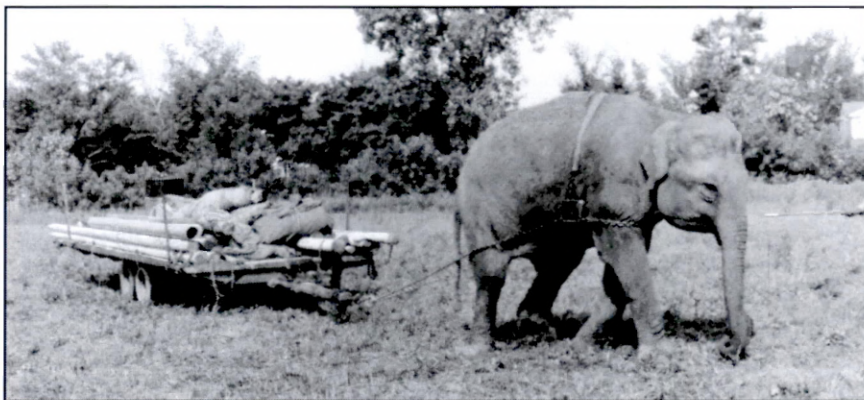


ciano, trapeze featured in 10-web aerialists; 12. Clown fire house; 13. Loyals bareback riding; 14. Estradas' risley, Canestrellis' acrobatics and Logan Kids unicycles; 15. Valencianos, Rosie Wright, Connors and Babe Woodcock, dog acts, with Newman's bears; 16. Clown walk around; 17. Marquez Troupe comedy trapeze; 18. Swinging ladders; 19. Don Carr's liberty horses; 20. Alfonso Loyal, Peter Konosh, Polo Montecon and Francesco Valenciano, juggling; 21. Clown covered wagon; 22. Elephants in three rings, and 23. Finale.

"Staff: Show is operated by Moore Equipment Co., with Mrs. Jack Moore as president traveling with the circus. Other personnel includes D. R. Miller, general manager; B. H. Black and Ted Bowman, assistant managers; H. W. (Howdy) Arhart, executive agent; Jimmy Kernan, concessions boss; Harry Brown, advance man; Joe Wright, advance heralds boss; Bill English, phone crew; Freddy Logan, lot and big top boss; Larry Rodgers, side show canvas boss; Harry Dann, equestrian director and announcer; Obert Miller and Dee Peterson, front door; Rosie Baker, office; Bill Dinclamon, menagerie boss; Buzz Barnes and Doris Smith, cook house; Penny Moore, prop boss; Frank Ellis, ad banners and promotions; Paul Smith, bill posting; Isla Miller and Alma Baines, wardrobe, and Kirby Grant, bandleader.

"Side Show manager Henry and Sondra Thompson have eight platforms of acts and oddities plus petting zoo and hippo. Thompsons talk out front with Paul Hubbard as

Generator semi No. 60 in 1969. John Goodall photo.



inside lecturer. Attractions include Hubbard's magic and sword box; Don Washburn's vent, guillotine and magic; Pearl Hubbard's blade box; Canestrelli's fire eating and knife throwing, and Thompson's Punch & Judy and electric chair. Midget calf is in the annex. Also on the grounds is Shearers' pony sweep and three pit shows; Ken Gottschalk's snake show, Vernon Goins' What-Is-It show and turtle show."

The May 17 *Amusement Business* reported: "Although Carson & Barnes Circus has reportedly been playing to excellent business during opening weeks of the season (AB, May 3), shortage of working men has dogged the show.

"Circus went on every scheduled performance with everybody from general manager D. R. Miller on down doing double duty. During several stands in the move across north Texas into Oklahoma, the big menagerie tent (90-foot, round with three 40-foot middles) could not be put up for lack of help. At some shows, prop boss Penny Moore had only three men to help set the five working rings. Miller said at least 15-20 extra workers would be needed to get the show up and down and still leave performers fresh for their acts.

"Some dates the big top (120-foot round with three 40 foot middles) was not unspooled at all. At Irving, Texas, the lot was small and the menagerie top was used for the performance with side show top and front yard filling the lot. At

Big top pole trailer being spotted by an elephant in 1969. John Goodall photo.

Mesquite, Texas, the sponsor wanted the show in Mesquite Rodeo building, and although the Estrada's perch top mounter scraped the roof it was done. Only the side show top and midway were set up."

The July 26 *Amusement Business* reported: "Carson and Barnes Circus, premiering its five-ring format this season, did very well around the Chicago area the past three weeks. Other Midwest dates have reportedly been up over past years.

"Show wound up a 10-day run June 29 sponsored by the Illinois State Lodge-Fraternal Order of Police on Maywood Race Track property' Twenty-one shows under the 2,800-seat tent brought in 42,000 persons paying \$2.50 & \$1. An additional \$1 was charged for reserved seats. Weather was typical—hot, humid and wet.

"Weather didn't clear up for the July 2 north suburban Waukegan Jaycees date, but 5,300 came out anyway for two shows.

"One day of heavy rains greeted the show during the July 4-6 stand at Oak Brook International Sports Core, farther west of Chicago than Maywood. Close to 16,800 attended the eight performances. Tickets were \$3 for adults and \$1.50 for kids. Reserved seats were \$5.

"Oak Brook was literally a society/charity event, with many local patrons donating \$100 or more and some buying advertising space for a like amount. Chicago Mayor Richard Daley provided city buses for 2,800 inner-city youngsters to attend a special free show. Beatrice Foods sup-



plied free food and candy while Coca-Cola provided drinks.

"Publicity was heavy for both the Oak Brook and Maywood runs. Local newspapers, including Chicago's, gave the circus both front page and special section coverage. Charles Seldman was said to have booked and promoted both dates.

"Business manager Ted Bowman told *AB* business is up this year, due in part to the five-ring format, which is used as a strong selling point to sponsors.

"Show is larger this year due to all Kelly-Miller Circus equipment and animals, plus most key personnel, being absorbed by C & B. This is the first year since 1937 K-M hasn't been on the road.

"When the sponsor provides tractors, the show brings out 10 animal cages and two wagons for parades. Elephants and hippos also are used.

"Five rings enabled the show to open with two cage acts, Fred Logan and Don Carr. Only two specs use all rings, but the tear-down is simplified by the additional rings. Also, it gives the show a more massive appearance. Performances ran smoothly for two hours and fifteen minutes.

"Chicago-area runs could have been improved with the addition of a flying act. Although 14-year-old Martin Lamberti was brought in as a special attraction, he couldn't offset the lack of flying performers. Also, three clowns don't seem to be a sufficient number."

John Goodall provided a comprehensive review of the show in the January-February 1970 *White Tops*.

Portions of his comments included:

"The Carson & Barnes midway lineup has Shorty Sheaver's 8 pony sweep on the left front side under a red and white striped awning with



Small cages for Fred Logan's wild animal act being unloaded from inside a seat semi in 1969. John Goodall photo.

orange side poles. Sheaver's privately-owned ape show is next. This unit was with K-M last year. There are two Wells Cargo trailers, the first of which is Ken Gottschalk's snake pit show and the second, a what-is-it show and turtle show. Both of these 40-foot trailers also contain a state-room for performers. Canvas banners which were painted by J. Sigler, Tampa, front the pit shows. The combination midway diner and cook-house, which is from Kelly-Miller show, is the last vehicle on the left. It is also painted in the show colors of yellow and orange and is run by Richard Shepard.

"In the center midway is the office ticket trailer with Rose Baker in charge. This attractively painted trailer is pulled overland by the Midget Cow show metro van. Behind the office is a concession stand mounted on a trailer run by Gladys and Whitey Black. Bill Swain's tan popcorn trailer from the K-M show stands in front of the marquee.

"From front to the marquee on the

Stake driver truck pulling an unusual big top pole trailer in 1969. John Goodall photo.



right side is the orange and yellow novelty trailer run by Doc Phillips, who is also 24-hour man. He has a jewelry joint, shooting gallery and dart game. There are four state-rooms for performers on the back side of the trailer. This unit, also from K-M, is pulled by a pickup truck with a camper body which is used as a sleeper this

year. Last year the truck carried concession supplies. The side show banner line and bally platform, which are covered elsewhere, complete the right side.

The midway is well lit with a six-bulb cluster of 150-watt bulbs in front of the office-ticket wagon. There are two spots mounted in top of the pole. In addition there are clusters of four bulbs each in front of the Blacks' novelty stand and the popcorn trailer. There are two speakers on top of each banner line and two speakers mounted on the ape show.

"After the evening show Odie Doddie runs a high pitch on a platform built on the side of his Chevrolet panel truck. He attracts a reasonable crowd.

"The side show canvas is last year's Carson & Barnes side show-menagerie top. It is a push-pole 60 foot. Middles of white canvas with red and blue trim and the sidewall is blue and white stripe. The tent is supported by 3 aluminum center poles, one row of 12 wooden quarter poles painted orange with white tops and 32 aluminum side poles. Interior lighting consists of 3 wooden boards with 4 bulb clusters each. The bulbs are 150 watt.

"The side show is fronted by banner line semis No. 68 and 45 plus the bally platform. Both the semis, which were on last year's Kelly-Miller show, carry 5 panels each picturing side show features and animals. The bally platform is a trailer which was constructed from the old K-M snake pit show. Above the platform on a white board is the lettering 'Circus Side Show.' The back of the platform features an oversized head of a growling tiger with red panels on

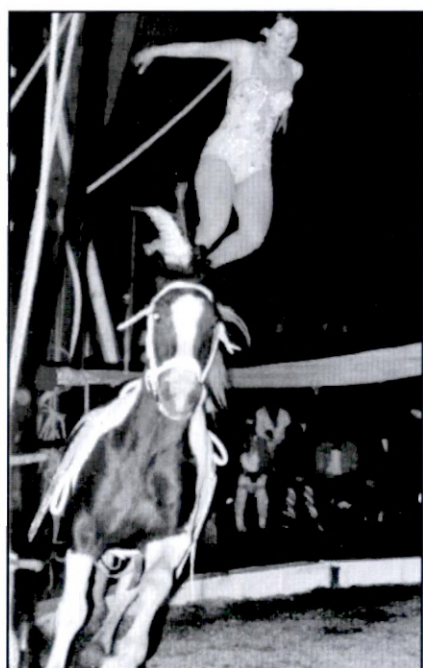


each side with yellow lettering 'Cavalcade of Unusual' and 'Oddities of 1969.' There are entrance doors on each side of the platform. The ticket booths are red with yellow trim. Side poles, platforms, and miscellaneous equipment are carried in the trailer, which is painted yellow on the upper half and orange on the lower half as are the bannerline semis. Red, white, and blue masking is used to cover the undergear of the three vehicles on the midway.

"Henry and Sondra Thompson are managing the side show. Henry gives the bally and Sondra, Shorty Lynn, and Steve Baker sell tickets at 50 cents. June Russell Woolrich helps out taking tickets while recovering from recent surgery.

"One of the features is the petting zoo with a goat, two Mexican burros, a llama, a guanaco, two sheep, and Clyde, the Arabian camel (one hump). The semi carrying Otto, the hippo, is used as a blow-off along the back wall. On the road this semi carries 6 ponies for the pony sweep in the rear compartment and 2 in the front section. There is also a small three-section cage (No. 74) painted

Luci Loyal performing in 1959. John Goodall photo.



Carson & Barnes seat semi trailer in 1969. John Goodall photo.

blue which holds 2 peacocks, 2 skunks, and an ogouti, which is a South American rodent.

"As the season began, the features were: Paul Hubbard, inside lecturer; the Hubbards, magic and sword box; Don Washburn, vent, guillotine and magic; Pearl Hubbard, blade box; Canestrelli, fire eating and knife throwing; the Thompsons, Punch and Judy and the electric chair. In addition there is a midget cow show.

"The Hubbards left the show after a month and the current lineup is: Don Washburn (Sparky, the Clown) vent guillotine and magic; Pietro and Joyce Canestrelli, knife throwing and fire eating; Henry Thompson, sword swallowing; the Thompsons, Punch and Judy electric chair; Vernon Goins, tattooed man; and Don Washburn and Gloria Marquez, blade box. Canvas boss is Larry Rogers who is assisted by John Worley, Vernon Goins, and John Baker.

"At the end of the midway is the white and red marquee semi with the walk through entrance. The front door is manned by Obert Miller, Dory's father, and Dale Peterson. A large clown head, attached to a sky-board which reads 'To the Circus' in red, dominates the midway. To the left of the red entrance ramp, painted on the side of the entrance semi, is a running lion and a red flag with white letters reading 'CARSON.' On the right side is a charging tiger and flag lettered 'BARNES.' The words 'MAIN ENTRANCE' in blue with yellow trim are above the ramp. The truck undergear is covered by red and blue striped canvas. This unit makes an excellent color flash on the free menagerie is set up behind entrance semi.

"The menagerie canvas is the old

Carson-Barnes big top and a 90-foot round push-pole tent with two 40-foot middles. The show carries an extra 40-foot middle section which can be pressed into use in the event that something happens to the big top.

On more than one occasion

this season the performance has been given in the menagerie tent due to a lot too small to accommodate the big top. The menagerie canvas is being put up by seven performers who receive extra pay for their labor."

Concession income was an important source of money. Burlington, Iowa, played on May 28, was a strong day, butcher sales in the big top were \$119.50; candy pitch was \$135.45; novelties were \$32.55; popcorn was \$55.10; grease joint, \$45.40; menagerie stand, \$211.75; snow cones were \$83.50; candy apples, \$11.75; cotton candy, \$12.90. Total for the day was \$1,059.

Crown Point, Indiana, played on June 12, was another big day. Butcher sales in the big top were \$87.30; candy pitch was \$62.15; novelties were \$21.20; popcorn was \$77.00; midway grease joint, \$31.86;

The Cassidy balancing act in the 1969 performance. John Goodall photo.







Fred Logan's cat act cages going into big top. in 1969. John Goodall photo.

menagerie stand, \$98.00; snow cones, \$53.50; candy apples, \$21.70; cotton candy, \$169.75; midway joints, \$10.00. Total for the day was \$1,074.85.

Goodall continued: "As the show moved north following the Chicago area dates, the menagerie was reduced by four cages. On July 8, one of the seat semis carrying cages 70, 71, 72, and 80 broke an axle near O'Hare field on the way to Libertyville, Illinois. The driver and helper stayed with the rig until picked up by other circus personnel and driven to the circus lot. The state police noticed the driver with the truck in a toll plaza early Wednesday morning and ignored the semi. Later the police noticed that the trailer was alone. The police claim that the animals were abandoned and not fed. They notified the Animal Welfare League of Chicago which impounded the animals and trailer. Dory Miller told this writer that he personally sent men with food and water to the animals prior to the police removing the animals.

"The animals remained at the League's quarters in Chicago. The director refused to release them to the show and, according to articles in the Chicago papers, he was attempting to give the animals to a several zoos. He stated that the animals will be put to sleep if they are not claimed by zoos. A few blocks away in a parking lot was the seat trailer which was partially dismantled by workers from

the League while removing the cages. It would appeared the trailer was beyond repair and would not be reclaimed by the show."

Following the Chicago area dates the circus played Michigan City, Indiana and three more stands in Illinois. It entered Wisconsin on July 11 at Kenosha for nine stands. It went into Minnesota at Winona on July 22. By August 2 it was in Iowa at Mason City. The route took the show through Nebraska, Kansas and Oklahoma. Tulsa was played from September 1 to 5. Booking problems left September 8, 24, and 28 as layovers.

Early in September Harry N. Brown, contracting agent, wrote the show: "Muskogee is the only town I know where to mail this to you as I

Kirby Grant and D. R. Miller in 1969. John Goodall photo.



don't know where you will lay over.

"In fact I didn't know you were laying over until I ran into the bill-posters. I have dates up to Saturday in Helena, Arkansas. I have absolutely no idea as to where to go from there. I know you are back on a circus with short help trying to move it, but I just have to have contracts and lot locations."

The show was in Russellville, Arkansas on September 9 and Cleveland, Mississippi on September 15. Louisiana was entered on September 20 at Bogalusa. Nine stands were played in that state. The circus closed with a two day stand in Orange, Texas on October 3 and 4.

*Amusement Business* of October 25 contained the final report of the show: "After 25 weeks on the road, Carson & Barnes Circus has ended what office manager Ted Bowman calls it a 'highly successful season' and returned to winter quarters. Show toured 13 states closing October 3 at Orange, Texas.

"Work has already started on plans and improvements for the 1970 season, he said, with 20 men at quarters getting equipment ready. Enlarged this season with 27 trucks and a 120-foot round top with three 40-foot middles, show has ordered a 200-ft. middle for the 1970 season. The menagerie top, 90-foot round with two 10-foot middles, will remain. A total of 40 equipment trucks will probably be needed, to transport the new equipment, seats and expanded menagerie, he said."

After the Carson & Barnes Circus closed in 1969 D. R. Miller bought the Moores' half interest. One third of the purchase amount was paid with the other two thirds being paid in 1970 and 1971.

The 1970 season was the start of the Miller family's sole ownership of the Carson & Barnes Circus, now in its 30th year.

The Circus World Museum, Al Stencell, Ted Bowman, John Goodall, Don Carson, Doug Lyon and John Holley provided material for this article.



# Side Lights On The Circus Business

## PART NINE

By David W. Watt

July 19, 1913

In different departments in show business, and there were many of them, occasionally a character different from all the others that you have ever seen would show up. It was along in the middle seventies that a young man by the name of Lou Williams came to the Burr Robbins show and went to work as a canvasman. Lou was a good, faithful worker, never drank and was always tending to his business and had little or nothing to say to his associates.

After being with the Burr Robbins show for some two or three years, Lou showed up here in the spring as was his custom two or three weeks before time for the show to start on the road. Lou's kind would always show up about this time in the spring and it goes without saying they were usually broke and hungry. Lou walked down on the winter quarters where they were fitting out the show for the road, expecting to receive board for his work until such time as the show would take the road.

Much to his surprise Burr Robbins was the first man he met and Mr. Robbins was not feeling just right and the minute he got his eye on Lou Williams, he told him to get away from the winter quarters and stay away until time for the show to open and that he was tired of boarding tramp canvasmen for two or three weeks before time for the show to start out. By the time Lou got back up town it was dark, but he found out where I lived and said nothing to anybody, but went to the barn, crawled into the hay and went to sleep.

When I went to the barn in the morning Williams was sitting in the front door and commenced telling me his troubles. I asked him where he

came from and he said, "I came from nowhere in particular, but I got here last night expecting to help fit out the show, but Mr. Robbins drove me away."

I told Lou that I would find him a place to work till time for the show to start and then he could join out. When the show was ready to take the road, much to Lou's surprise, he was given charge of the front door which was one of the best jobs around the show for a canvasman.

Lou had never traveled with any other show and the following spring came into Janesville to start out only to find that Burr Robbins had sold the show to Myers and Shorb and that his one best friend, as he called me, had gone to the Adam Forepaugh show. It was only a few days till he walked up in front of the ticket wagon with a smile on his face and said, "You can't shake me."

Conditions and distances for those kind of people cut little figure. Their kind of tickets were good over all roads and they could go one thousand miles for the same price that could go one hundred.

I asked Lou if he came in the chair car and ate in the diner and he simply smiled and said, "I had the best that my ticket called for but," he said, "never mind where I came from or how I got here. I want to get to work and I know you can find me a place."

I said to him, "If you wait till I get through in the wagon I'll take you to the boss canvasman and get you the best that he has left."

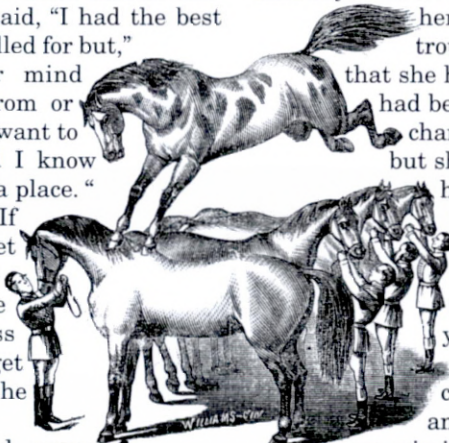
They had had some

trouble with the back doorman with the show which was an important position and one that I knew Lou Williams could fill to the letter, for while he was at work he had no friends and was always on the job. It was impossible for anybody to get by him at the back entrance to the show without an order from Mr. Forepaugh or the ticket wagon.

Lou was an undersized man, but well built and was looked upon by his associates as a hard man to handle. Along later in the season we were showing in a town in Michigan and in the morning I went down to the hotel for breakfast and although I registered from Janesville, Wisconsin, before I was half through with my breakfast the landlord came in and asked me if I was not the ticket agent and treasurer of the show. When I told him I was, he said, "I wish when you are through with your breakfast that you would stop in the office. I want to have a talk with you."

When I came out he took me into the ladies' parlor and introduced me to a widow lady who owned the grounds that we were to show on that day. This woman with tears in

her eyes told me her troubles. She told me that she had a brother who had been a worthless character all his life, but she had boarded him and furnished him a home for many years. She said, "A few days ago my check on you for the use of the grounds which called for \$25.00 and six tickets came up missing. I knew in a





minute that he had taken it, but on account of his being my brother, I did not want to have him arrested. I came to see you to see if something could not be done whereby you would give me the money for the use of the grounds and I will give you any kind of a receipt you wish."

I gave her the money and the tickets and told her that the only trouble would be I would have to look out for the check for some days to come, that it might be sent ahead, but that I would take care of that part of it. She said, "If my brother shows up with that check I don't care so much what you people do to him if you can take the check away from him."

Along in the afternoon after the people had all gone into the show he showed up and standing back ten or fifteen feet from the ticket wagon told me that he had a check on us for \$25.00 and six tickets and that he wanted the money. I said to him, "Give me your check and if it is all right, I'll pay you."

He said, "I have seen you circus people before. You will not get this check until I get the money."

I told him that was not the way that we did business and he would have to give me the check before I could pay him any money.

He said, "I'll wait here till you get out of that wagon and you know it will I be you and I for it."

"Well," I said, "This is a good place for you to come to look for trouble, but I am so busy with other matters that I never have time to do any fighting around the show. If you are looking for that kind of a game, I'll send for a man that will accommodate you."

He was a big, rough looking chap and looked the part of a fighter. I sent for Lou Williams, the back doorman, and when he came to the wagon I told him what this man was looking for and I said, "I didn't know but you might accommodate him."

Lou walked around him for a few seconds till he finally got the chance and in quick succession he landed a couple of Jack Johnson's best on his man and he was down and out. I



told Lou to go into his pockets and find a check that he had that I wanted. Lou did this and by that time quite a crowd had gathered and some of his friends got him into a vehicle and took him downtown for repairs.

I got out of the ticket wagon and went in to watch the hippodrome races and had only been sitting there for a few minutes when the chief of police came in, tapped me on the shoulder and said, "Is your name Watt?" When I told him it was, he said, "I want to see you a few minutes." Of course, for a few seconds I could see all kinds of trouble ahead for me.

After we had walked out into the menagerie, the chief pulled a good cigar out of his pocket and gave it to me and said, "They tell me that a friend of yours at your suggestion trimmed up a young man that had a check for the lot. This man has made me all kinds of trouble for several years and this is the first time that I have seen him get exactly what was coming to him. The landlord told me to tell you that after the show is out tonight to get three or four of your friends and come down to the hotel and he will have a nice lunch for you. He wants to thank you for what you have done for the lady that owns the lot."

This was the first intimation that I had in all these years that Lou Williams was a real fighter. It was not so many days later that I got into conversation with him and tried to find out something about his early life. He said that his home originally was in Pittsburgh, that his father was a laborer there, but when he was a boy about eleven years old his father and mother died and he had to shift for himself. He said that after his parents died a man running a livery stable there took him to his home to live, "but there was nothing for me," he said, "but hard knocks and very little to wear and it was not long before I left and then drifted from one place to another, but I was always able to take care of myself and when I got to be about seventeen

years old, I got it into my head that there was plenty of money to be earned at the prize fighting game and in the outlying districts of Pittsburgh, there were often set-tos of this kind especially on Saturday evening. I engaged in several of them, usually getting a little the best of it until I finally concluded to make it a business. But these were always for small purses and as I gradually got up against better men it was not so long until I found out that my battling average was not the best and that after I paid the repair bills that there was little in it and then I drifted away to Chicago and from there, I think it was in '76," he said, "that I came to Janesville and started out with the Burr Robbins show."

Lou Williams as a working man was the soul of honor in the work he was given around the show and was always looked upon as thoroughly reliable. But after the death of Adam Forepaugh in January '90 he never returned to the show and this was the last that I knew of him.

In Edward Peyson Weston's car Thursday morning in front of the Myers House I recognized an old friend by the name of Sam Ellis who had charge of Mr. Weston's books of his life and also was assistant manager in the general business of Mr. Weston's long walk from New York to Minneapolis. Sam Ellis was with the Burr Robbins show in '79 and later with the Adam Forepaugh show appearing with that show in '84 where he remained for some years later.

Sam received a severe injury in a railroad wreck to the Forepaugh Show at Ottumwa, Ia., in the latter part of '84 which sent him to the hospital for the balance of the season and I think most of the coming winter. The following spring he was back at his work good as ever, but he still carries a long scar on his cheek to remind him of the railroad wreck of the Forepaugh show many years ago.

While I have not seen him for twenty-five years, he knew me in a minute and called to me as I was walking by the car. He said, "We just arrived from Beloit and Mr. Weston has just retired to his room and ordered his breakfast and I want you to go up and meet the old gentleman for a few minutes."



We went to Mr. Weston's room and Sam told him that he and I were partners in the show business many years ago and that in the meantime he had forgotten all about Janesville being my home. Sam told me yesterday that with the exception of about a year and a half he had been in the show business in one branch or another ever since he started in the business as a small boy peddling peanuts with the Thayer and Noyes show in eighteen and sixty seven.

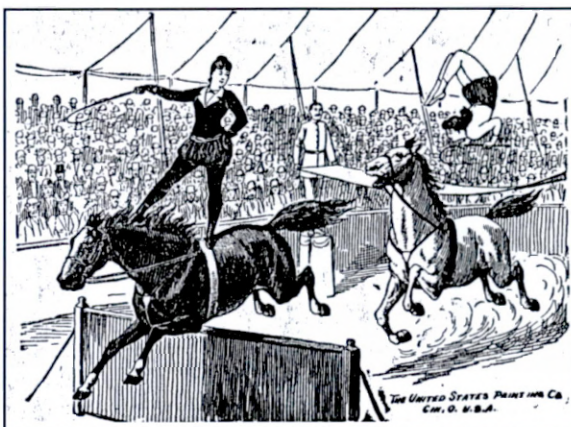
While Sam Ellis will be sixty-seven years old his next birthday, he would readily pass for a man of fifty and while speaking of his age yesterday he said, "Dave, if you had stayed in the business, you probably today would look as young as I do."

Sam and I had a good visit during the day and Thursday night about nine o'clock I bade him good-bye as they left for Evansville. It is old timers like these that I enjoy meeting and rehearsing over old times together.

#### July 26, 1913

It was early after the Civil War that the big shows commenced to invade the southern country and although everything was in bad shape there, the average person seemed to find enough money to go to the circus. There was an old darkey woman who had heard many stories about the wonderful animals in the circus and of all these that seemed to her the most impossible was the camel. She was a very old lady and wore glasses. One of the first animals for her to run against in the menagerie was the camel. She walked around and around while he stood with his long crooked neck and double hump and viewed him from all quarters. Finally, walking away from him and raising her hands high above her head she declared, "I doesn't care what anybody has tole me. Dere ain't no such thing." She would not even believe her own eyes.

After a time she went on into the circus and after she saw the wonderful things there and came back through the menagerie and took another look at the camel she



declared, "I mus' think he is suah enough alive."

In those days there were hundreds of colored people that would follow a parade all through the town, come back to the show grounds and watch the side show banners and listen to the music in the big top and go home and tell their friends all about what they had seen at the show, although there were hundreds of them that had little or no money and never got inside of the canvas. But it was a big day to them just the same. You would often hear them say, "You are suah enough like de pictures on de wall."

Not so long ago I had a letter from a man by the name of Den Stone who was with the Burr Robbins show for two or three seasons and for a time in the earlier days had owned a show of his own. He had many ups and downs in the business. Mr. Stone at one time was a good all around performer and for some years was considered a first class clown. But he told me that on his next birthday he would be seventy-one years old and that he had retired from the business and wanted to know if I attended the banquet of the Showmen's League held in Chicago last spring and if I thought the Showmen's home would be built in Chicago.

Only last week some businessmen of Chicago offered the officers of the Showmen's League a beautiful site on the banks of Rock River and \$20,000 in cash if they would build the home in Beloit. When anything looks good to the businessmen of Beloit, they are always ready to make them a bid. Where this home will eventually be built is not settled yet, but in all probability it will be located in Chicago.

As Den Stone spent many years of

his life as a clown I know of no one who would be entitled to a comfortable home in the Showmen's home any more than he who has entertained the public and brought pleasure and laughter into many lives, for who of us is there that would not rather laugh many times than shed one tear?

In the early days of the wagon shows, many hardships were encountered that would almost seem impossible today. In '79 with the Burr Robbins show we were showing in Red

Wing, Minnesota, about 22 miles from St. Paul. St. Paul was the next stand and was the largest city that the Burr Robbins show had ever showed in up till that time. We got an early start out of Red Wing. I had to be the last one out of town in the morning as it was my business to stay back and settle all the bills after everybody else had gone.

About two miles out of St. Paul I overtook Burr Robbins and his wife and just at that time Robbins happened to think that he had left \$2,500 in large bills tied up in a salt sack under the mattress in his room. He said to me, "I want you to turn around and go back to Red Wing as fast as you can and I'll go on into St. Paul and look after the show."

I turned around and drove back to Red Wing and when I pulled up in front of the hotel the landlord wanted to know what was the matter. I said to him that Mr. Robbins had forgotten a package of valuable papers and that I would slip up to the room and get them. He said, "You'll find them there all right for the room has not been disturbed since Mr. Robbins left."

I found the \$2,500 under the mattress and told the landlord that I had found the papers and hustled back to St. Paul, hardly thinking of the three times that I had doubled the road and driven my team about sixty miles without feed. But happenings of this kind and many others of a different nature were constantly coming up in the days of the old wagon shows.

There was a little incident connected with Lou Williams, the back door-man of whom I spoke last week, that I overlooked. Lou Williams had an



old wooden chair at the back door where he was always to be found when the show was going on.

One afternoon a little, ragged urchin of about five years forgot himself and ran inside of the tent and Lou reached out and grabbed him and was holding him in his lap when Mr. Forepaugh came through the tent. Stepping up to Lou, in a stern voice he said, "What are doing with that boy?"

Lou, without looking up said, "Go on, Governor, go on. This boy is having the time of his life and he's taking nothing from you."

Mr. Forepaugh walked on and while there was nothing said, it is fair to say that he thought more of Lou Williams, his back doorman, than ever. This only goes to show that there is many a warm heart beating under the well worn clothes of the workingman with the circus.

Many times after the show had gotten well underway in the afternoon there would be anywhere from a dozen to twenty boys out in front of the show ready to do anything to see the circus. Mr. Forepaugh would go out and stand them in line and commence at the head and ask the first boy if he had any money. If he said "no" he would tell him to turn his pockets wrong side out. Many a time I have seen him with twenty of these boys in line with their pockets all turned wrong side out, marching them in to see the afternoon show. This seemed to please him, and as Lou Williams told him, it took nothing from him. It is fair to say that the little urchin that Lou Williams held on his knee all through the afternoon performance has not forgotten his first circus and how he came to see it.

News reached here yesterday to the effect that the Buffalo Bill show had been tied up in Denver on account of a big advertising bill of something like \$66,000 which they owed to a printing company in Chicago. The receipts of the afternoon had been something like \$6,000 which they turned over to the printing company. It was said that arrangements would be speedily made for the settlement of the balance owed the company. They were to show in Colorado Springs the following day, but whether or not they got matters adjusted in time to make

Colorado Springs is not known. But it is safe to say that a show like that would make some kind of arrangements and fill their engagements for the balance of the season. It was said that during the extreme heat of the last three or four weeks that the show took much less than expenses for some time, and it is hoped that they will be able to adjust matters so as to finish out this season's work.



August 4, 1913

The Miller Bros. & Arlington 101 Ranch Wild West has come and gone and this to the average Janesville citizen does not mean so much. But back of this the name of 101 Ranch has been prominent for many years in the history making of Oklahoma. It was 43 years ago last April that George W. Miller, father of the Miller Bros. of today, left the old home in Kentucky and started with a fine overland outfit for California, and it was after many weeks of hard travel that the family came to a stop in Kay county, Oklahoma, and during the summer several other outfits bound for the far West had joined them. When they reached this garden spot in Oklahoma they all agreed that they would stop there a few days and rest up their horses before starting out across the desert.

During this time George W. Miller had driven around Kay county for some miles and the third day on arriving back to camp he said to his wife, "Mother, I think this is about as near the Garden of Eden as any spot I ever saw, and it is here that we will drive our stakes and make a home." This was along about the middle of the summer in 1870 and it was here that George W. Miller and his wife raised their little family and began in a small way to lay the foundations for one of the greatest ranches in the

world.

They now have 110,000 acres in the ranch, 20,000 of which is in grain this year. They employ 700 people on the ranch. They have in round numbers 30,000 head of cattle, 15,000 horses and mules and 10,000 hogs and the Miller residence cost \$40,000. They have several tenant houses and all their buildings on the ranch are lighted and heated with natural gas.

They have oil wells which for more than a year have turned out an average of 125 barrels of oil every twenty-four hours. Last year they sold 250,000 bushels of seed corn, ranging in price from \$.90 to \$2.50 per bushel. This was all sold to jobbers in New Orleans, Houston and other southwestern cities. Geo. W. Miller, the father, died eight years ago, and up to that time there were none of the Miller family that ever thought of going into the show business.

I will now tell you something about the partner of the Miller Bros., Eddie Arlington, as he is known in the show business. His father, George Arlington, who is the acting manager back of the show, has practically been in the business all his life. He was with the old Adam Forepaugh show for some years and later went with the Barnum & Bailey show, where for many years he had charge of the privileges. George Arlington is one of the few businessmen who can pay out his money with the same smile and grace that he can take it in. Joe Miller, the only one of the Miller Bros. with the show, was the organizer and is the director of all the inside workings of the great 101 Ranch Wild West.

Only last year the government sent their agents to 101 Ranch and there secured pictures of the old Indian and the buffalo to be used on the new nickel which was designed and minted last spring, and this same Indian and same buffalo whose pictures adorn the new nickel were here with the show last Tuesday.

Edward Arlington, who is an equal owner with the Miller Bros. of the great show, after finishing his schooling and before he was out of his teens, was taken in charge by James A. Bailey of the Barnum & Bailey show, and has been in the business



continuously ever since. He was one of Jas. A. Bailey's able lieutenants all through the five years which the show spent in Europe, and no man with the Barnum show stood higher in Mr. Bailey's estimation than did Eddie Arlington.

It was six years ago last winter that he conceived the idea of visiting 101 Ranch and making a proposition to the Miller Bros. to start the Wild West show which exhibited here last Tuesday, and on account mostly of its coming from the famous 101 Ranch, it soon was prominent before the people of California to Maine, and before coming to Janesville this year, they visited all the large cities through the east and have enjoyed a big business all during the season.

The winter quarters of the show proper are at Lake View, New Jersey, halfway between Patterson and Passaic. This is winter quarters for everything except the stock. This is always shipped to 101 Ranch at Oklahoma and wintered there. Eddie Arlington makes his home at Lake View, and it is here that he organizes the show every winter for its campaign the coming summer.

It is here that he rebuilds the cages, the cars and makes the wardrobes and along in March everything is shipped to Oklahoma where they usually open in April. The show expects to close the season sometime between the 20th of November and the 1st of December this year.

From Janesville the show went to Fond du Lac; from Fond du Lac to Oshkosh; then to Waupaca; then to Neenah; then to Milwaukee for two days, Sunday and Monday. From Milwaukee they go west, showing two days in Minneapolis and one in St. Paul.

It is safe to say that the 101 Ranch leaped into notoriety quicker than any show that ever was put onto the road. Little did Father Miller think the day that he drove his stakes in Kay county, Oklahoma that it would become one of the famous ranches of the world.

Mrs. Miller, mother of the Miller brothers, is still living and with Mrs. Joe Miller returned only a week ago from a three months' trip through Europe and came from New York direct to Detroit last week, where they joined the show. They

told me here that they would return to their home in Oklahoma after they were through visiting with the son and husband, who is director of the outfit.

Joe Miller is a typical Kentuckian, with the unmistakable accent in his voice. A ready talker and a most genial gentleman to meet and when I bade him and Eddie Arlington goodbye Tuesday evening, they said, "Dave, you and your friends will always be welcome visitors at 101 Ranch."

#### August 9, 1913

In this week's letter on life with the circus I certainly have a hard duty to perform. Some four months ago I wrote an article about an old friend that had passed away in southwestern Texas and all my information came from the New York papers. It all came about in this way.

It was in the summer of eighteen and ninety-nine that my old friend C. A. Davis was fighting for his life with the much dreaded disease consumption, and his physician advised him that there was but one chance for him and that was to hike for southwestern Texas and remain there on a ranch and keep out of doors day and night. Charlie Davis got all his earthly belongings together, took the advice of his physician and started for the Southwest. He located on a ranch some fifteen miles southwest of El Paso, Texas, and there com-

Joseph C. Miller and his horse Chester in 1913. Pfening Archives.



menced his long fight against the dreaded disease.

Charlie's friends heard from him occasionally for many years, but something like a year and a half ago some two or three different eastern papers announced his death and a little later a Chicago paper spoke of him as the late C. A. Davis. Some four months ago I wrote up his career as newspaper writer and manager of more than one famous lecturer and also of different high class theatrical attractions.

In due course of time the article found its way to James Wilmarth, editor of the *El Paso Herald*, and it was not so long until Mr. Wilmarth carried to C. A. Davis on his Texas ranch the article on his life's work and the obituary.

One day last week I was more than surprised at receiving a letter from my old friend whom I supposed had died more than a year and a half ago. On opening the letter it certainly for a few seconds seemed to me that the Resurrection Day had come, but as he informed me in his letter, he had never really been counted out. The letter which I received from him and a card which announces him the president of the lungers' 200 year club and a recommendation from Robert G. Ingersoll, the noted lecturer, accompanied the letter, all of which I will give you in full, also his picture taken only two months ago. It certainly looks as though he is here to stay for many years to come and that this is true is the wish of scores of friends of Charlie Davis.

"El Paso July 28, 1913

"My Dear Watt:

"For three months I have been threatening to advise you of a little error that crept into your article in the Janesville paper last winter which was shown me by our mutual friend 'Col.' Wilmarth of the *El Paso Herald*. Threatening to do things, however, is an old specialty of mine and my thirteen year's stay in the Southwest has amplified and perfected that old characteristic of mine in a superlative degree.

"It is true that I have been fifty percent dead at times and perhaps ought to have gone the full count-one hundred-but the fact remains that the census enumerators still insist on including me in



the population of this particular planet. Life may not look as rosy as it once did to a man who has reached the half century mark, but still a live man knows where he is at. There are some serious objections to being placed in the undertaker's hands. For one thing, a dead man has no post office address.

"Aside from your desire to have me a resident of the graveyard your article was all right. I ought to feel complimented on having such a good obituary written. Have got a little used to the obituary act. Every now and then I see myself referred to in the eastern papers as the late C. A. Davis. Now that I have become 'restored' let me hear from you occasionally.

"There are three men on the El Paso Herald--Wilmarth, William Laughlin and H. H. Fris--who know you well. Knew you in Janesville. I have been in and out of El Paso for ten years and have heard Wilmarth and Laughlin speak of you during all that time. Always intended to write, but there are other things to do besides letter writing.

"One little issue I have had to meet has been the argument with the more or less genial tubercle bacilli. Am gradually wearing them out, but it has been an awful combat.

"Regards to Mrs. Watt and the Stillsons. I remember Fred the best. Also remember his brother, but have forgotten his first name. The father Riley Stillson was a strong, clean-cut personality and I recall him vividly. Fred and my older brother Jim (who died in 1886) were big friends.

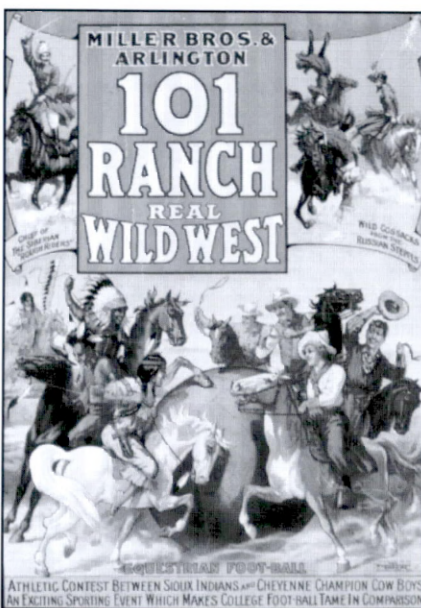
"Came near forgetting to tell you that my brother Tom died two years ago. I have been in the Southwest continuously since the close of the Forepaugh Sells season of 1899. Have not been north since. New Orleans and Los Angeles are the only two big towns I have seen during that time.

"Think the last time you and I met was in Chicago in the summer of 1898, I being there with the Forepaugh Sells circus.

"Is Charley Brooks still living? Yours always, C. A. Davis.

"PS Suppose you have heard of Bob Campbell's death. Poor Bob.

"Law office of Robert G. Ingersoll, 1121 New York Avenue, Washington,



Miller & Arlington Ranch poster used in 1913. Pfening Archives.

DC June 30, 1889.

"Charles A. Davis has been acting for me in the capacity of manager. I have always found him efficient, reliable and prompt. He is well acquainted with all the details of the business and will do exactly what he promises. He is perfectly honest and will always be found to be just what he represents himself to be. Yours truly, R. G. Ingersoll."

#### August 16, 1913

About three weeks ago news was received of the failure of the Two Bills' Shows at Denver, Colorado. This show was the Buffalo Bill Far West and Major Lillie Far East and went under the name of the Two Bills' Show, but it was really what has been known as the great Buffalo Bill Wild West which for several years was across the water playing the different countries in Europe. The show made money in Europe and came back to this country, and it was only this last spring that it really began to look as though the beginning of the end had come. While they started the season with something like \$35,000 of indebtedness, this was nothing for a great show like that. But a show of this magnitude must either make or lose money and very fast at that.

In Philadelphia where the show opened the weather conditions were bad for the two weeks and from there

they went to Madison Square Garden in New York where they again encountered bad weather and consequently small receipts. Later on in the season when the show opened in Chicago for nine days, the extreme heat made it impossible for people to attend the show and this was another financial failure.

And so it was that the great show kept on losing money until Denver was reached where the creditors took charge of the show and where in the near future it will be closed out at auction.

This is certainly a hard blow for Col. Cody. The show has been the pride of his life for many years. As he is now seventy-five years old it is a question whether he can ever get a show together again or not. After Col. Cody saw that the end had come, the one thing that seemed to grieve him most was that there were three or four weeks' back salary to the people, many of them who had been with him for years. He told his old friend Major Burke, who accompanied him back to Cody, Wyoming, if he could only pay the people every dollar that he owed them, he would not mind losing the balance of it.

But there is not one creditor of the Buffalo Bill Show today who is not satisfied that if Col. Cody ever gets on his feet again and gets to making money, he will pay dollar for dollar everything that he owes.

The following which is part of an article taken from the New York *Clipper* is probably as near the truth as can possibly be gotten at the present time:

Disaster has visited the Buffalo Bill Wild West and Pawnee Bill's Far East and unless some sort of an agreement is reached the show will not move out of Denver. Trouble, which has been pending for some time, culminated there in the attachment of the show for \$66,000 by the United States Printing and Lithograph Company, and as the show owners have not furnished the required bond, amounting to double that of the attachments, the organization cannot move.

A second attachment, supplementing the one mentioned, for \$20,000 filed in behalf of H. H. Tammen and F. G. Bonfils has proved an addition-





The Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill Wild West advance car in 1913. Pfening Archives.

al anchorage to the show, and there seems little likelihood of its continuing.

Commissioner Nisbett has placed deputies in charge of the show property and a disagreement between the two showmen owners presages a dissolution of partnership. A number of the advance dates have been canceled and every move points to a definite closing.

The Two Bills' Shows has been unfortunate this season since its opening in Philadelphia. In that city cold weather caused poor attendance. The New York engagement, immediately following, was most unprofitable and, in fact, in the majority of the big city dates along their route the show has not made money. In many of the one night stands business has been big, but the "one nighters" could hardly make up the losses met within the big cities.

With a show as big as the Two Bills there never seems to be any half way. It either is a big winner or a big loser, and when it is the latter it would take the resources of a multi-millionaire to tide it over the shoals.

The *Denver Post* of July 23 states the case authoritatively as follows: "The attachment Monday night in Denver of the Buffalo Bill and Pawnee Bill Shows by the United States Printing and Lithograph Company was a step taken as much in the interests of Buffalo Bill as it was in the interests of the printing and lithographic company, according to a statement made in Denver today by Adolph Marks of Chicago, general counsel of the United States Printing

and Lithograph Company at Cincinnati, Ohio.

"As general counsel for the United States Printing and Lithograph Company," said Mr. Marks, "I can say that we have none but the friendliest feelings for Colonel William Cody. Col. Cody is an honest man. If it is possible for a man to be too honest, then Col. Cody is that man. When Col. Cody returned to America from his last great tour of Europe, he paid voluntarily to the Bailey estate the sum of \$390,000, although the estate had not the scratch of a pen upon which to claim that debt. But Cody knew that he owed the money and Cody paid it on his own volition. So my company believe in Col. Cody and if Col. Cody had his way, there would be no attachment on the show now. But Cody's hands have been tied and they have been tied by the way in which he seems to have deeded over all his property to his present partner, Major Lillie-the Pawnee Bill of this present show combination."

"Here are the facts in the case. In December the United States Printing and Lithographing Company entered into a joint and several contracts with Colonel Cody and Major Lillie for the printing of all their posters and lithographic matter and programs and date bills for the season of 1913. It was estimated that the printing would amount in the season to about \$5,000. At that time my company held notes to the value of \$16,000 from the Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill Show, which notes matured in April and May of this year and which notes also were endorsed by Major Lillie."

"Now then, up to the beginning of July of this year, my company had instructed me to attach the show which came to Chicago at that time. I

prepared to attach, but Major saw me and asked for time. Lillie promised to send me \$10,000 on account of the \$60,000 if we would let the show go unattached and continue on for about two more weeks. This I agreed to do, although Lillie's note for \$16,000 on account of the printing for the previous season was then in default. We felt friendly to Colonel Cody and didn't want to embarrass him. After agreeing to that extension of time with Lillie we lent the show printing to the value of \$12,000 and that brought the total indebtedness of the Cody-Lillie shows to the printing company--for this present season--to more than \$16,000. And not one cent had been paid on that account. However, we did not attach in Chicago and the show went away from there on the tour that brought it to Denver last Sunday."

"Now, then, between leaving Chicago . . . [line missing] estimate that the receipts of the show were at least \$30,000 and yet Lillie had not sent us a dollar on account of his indebtedness. Therefore, in view of that default of Lillie's I instructed Charles H. Redmond and John T. Bottom, the attorneys who represent the United States Printing and Lithographic Company in Denver, to take such measures as they thought necessary here to protect my company."

"I reached Denver myself Monday morning and had a conference. Lillie admitted his default and asked me that we do nothing until another conference, which he asked for on Tuesday. But that delay we refused to agree to because it would have given Lillie the receipts for another day and evening. Therefore we attached the show and its cars and by constructive possession the tracks on which the cars owned and used by the show are now standing. Lillie has abandoned the men with the show and thrown them upon Denver, but I have arranged for their feeding and housing and I have also arranged for the return of the Indians with the show to their reservations. Meantime I want to say that Lillie has refused to meet us half way in any suggestion of compromise we have made. And Lillie has got Colonel Cody so tied up by trust deeds in the meantime that Colonel Cody is in Lillie's hands."



"Here is the situation regarding that matter: We offered to agree to defer payment of our account for two years if Lillie would transfer to us the mortgages on the real estate he has secured from Colonel Cody. Lillie refused to do this. Lillie holds Cody's estate and Lillie seems to mean to keep it. Lillie holds from Colonel Cody a mortgage on the ranch in North Platte which is worth at least \$100,000. Lillie holds from Cody a mortgage on the hotel owned by Cody in Cody, Wyoming. That hotel is worth \$75,000. Colonel Cody is willing to transfer these securities to our company so that the show may be released to finish the season, but Lillie point blank refuses to make any such transfer, and our only resource, therefore, was attachment."

"Now then, let me say something concerning the connection of the Sells-Floto Circus with the Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill shows. At the beginning of this season Mr. Bonfils and Mr. Tammen loaned to Colonel Cody and Major Lillie the sum of \$20,000 with which to start the season. That loan is now overdue. But Mr. Bonfils and Mr. Tammen have made no attempt of any kind to embarrass Colonel Cody and his partner because of default on that loan and they have not interfered in any way with the legal processes by which I was compelled to protect my company. They have been broad minded and generous throughout. Now, however, and quite naturally, Messrs. Bonfils and Tammen are protecting their own interests, irrespective of anybody else."

The Indians have been sent back to the reservations. The animals are being carefully looked after at the Sells-Floto winter quarters. Performers who are stranded in Denver have begun suits through various Denver attorneys for amounts owing them. All employees thus stranded have been cared for by the sheriff, the cook tent being kept open to accommodate these people.

**August 23, 1913**

In eighteen and eighty-nine,



Major Gordon L. Lillie and Col. William F. Cody. Pfening Archives

according to the agreement between the Barnum and the Forepaugh shows, the Adam Forepaugh show came west. That season it seemed that the entire country was up in arms over the labor question and in many towns in the west that we were to show in there were hundreds and thousands of people employed. Many of them were out on strike. We were billed to show most of the larger towns through Illinois and at the time the advance agent billed the different towns the strike did not look so bad. Streator, Illinois, was one of the towns billed and this was where several hundred coal miners had been at work and every week seemed to make the strike question worse. The coal miners had been idle for many weeks and most of them were out of money and getting desperate. But the town was billed and we had to show there or meet a big loss in canceling the day.

As the millionaire showman would not look good to the Streator miners and their families, it was up to Adam Forepaugh to do something. But the witty old German was equal to the situation, for about a week before we were to show in Streator he called his newspaperman into the ticket wagon

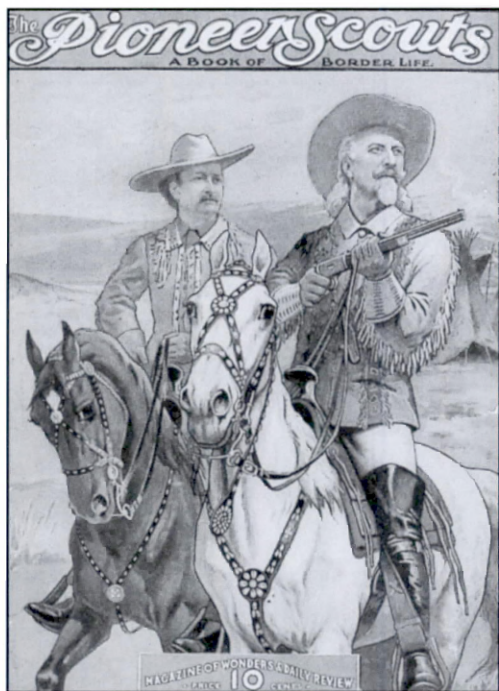
and said to him, "I want you to go to Streator and write a nice article saying that I want all the children of the striking miners between the ages of three and eighteen to be my guests at a dinner to be served in the cook tent especially set apart for them at 12 o'clock noon, and after that to be my guests at the afternoon performance and that I will reserve seats for as many as will come." This move on the part of Mr. Forepaugh was certainly one in the right direction.

The tables in the big tent were set for six hundred guests and at that they had to serve a second dinner for there were over one thousand children who took dinner that day as the guests of Adam Forepaugh. At one o'clock they were marched into the big tent to witness the afternoon show. There were many small children whom their mothers thought were too small to be sent alone and in cases of this kind, where the mothers accompanied them, they were also guests at the dinner and the show as well. In place of the show or the millionaire owner exciting the enmity of the miners, Mr. Forepaugh made the hit of his life and hundreds of the miners without a cent in their pockets came to the main entrance and thanked him for his generosity. While capital and labor were at swords' points, there was one millionaire that looked good to the striking miners. But Mr. Forepaugh did not live to visit Streator again, for he died on the 24th day of the following January; and shortly after that the widow received more than one letter of condolence from Streator, Illinois.

In all departments of a big circus there were always more or less people tiring of the business that quit at different times, never thinking how hard it might be to fill their places. This same year some three or four of the musicians in the band had quit at different times. Every day the leader of the band would start out early in the morning and try to find a musician or two that might take the places of those who had left. In a certain town in Wisconsin he found a young man about nineteen years of age who was a good slide trombone player and his ambition was to travel with a big circus. He had just



bought him a fine, big instrument and the leader of the band told him to be on the show grounds at such a time, that there would be a uniform for him there and that the parade



Cover of the 1913 Buffalo Bill-Pawnee Bill program. Pfening Archives

would start at such a time. The young man was there with his new horn long before time for the parade. He donned his new uniform and took his seat in the bandwagon with his new horn three-quarters of an hour before time for the parade to start. He seemed to want to be on exhibition in case any of his friends showed up so that they could get a good look at him.

With the show for many years was an old elephant called Gold Dust. Gold Dust for many years had placed the cages in the menagerie and moved different wagons around on the lot. While he was inclined to be peaceable he walked around near the bandwagon, took a look at the new musician and his horn, and well did old Gold Dust know that he was a newcomer and probably thought that he had no business there. Gold Dust reached up, caught the young man in his trunk and dashed him to the ground, breaking his new horn into many pieces and injuring the young man quite a little, but did not break

any bones. The young man's career as a musician with a big circus was a short one. He was taken to his home and a physician called. He was given money with which to buy a new horn with the promise of a position as soon as he recovered from his injuries. This seemed to be enough for the young man, for although he was given the route of the show for four weeks ahead and was expected to be on in a week or ten days, he never showed up.

The Powers elephants playing at the Nixon, Atlantic City, last week frightened a horse which dashed up the incline from Delaware Avenue and crashed into a roller chair in which was seated Adam Forepaugh, Jr. of Philadelphia. Forepaugh, who is an invalid, was flung into the air and landed on the walk in a shower of glass. Many people rushed to his aid and when he had recovered from the shock he was taken to his hotel.

It was only last week in Chicago that the lobby of the new Hotel Sherman was turned into a "big top" with its sawdust ring and circus performance brought there for the benefit of the engineers who were holding a convention in Chicago. A horse, five Shetland ponies and a mule romped about the lobby while hundreds of persons watched. The band played and two men sold peanuts and red lemonade. Nine "daredevil death defying" acts constituted the program on the tanbark. Trapeze performers flirted with "death" and slack wire performers "defied the laws of gravitation." It would have been a three ring circus if there had been two more rings. The circus was given in the middle of the hotel lobby. The chairs were removed and a heavy mat placed there. Circus seats were placed about the ring and men and women in evening gowns crowded the mezzanine balcony.

The circus was given as a part of the entertainment for the Traveling Engineers' Association which was holding its annual convention at the hotel. Franklin DuVaul, chief engineer for the Crane Company, was the ringmaster. He wore the patent leather boots, white trousers,

stovepipe hat and four-in-hand whip which accompany every regular ringmaster. Mr. Fenn's announcing was good for an engineer. Frank W. Bering, manager of the hotel, opened the performance by leading his Lynchburg comet band in the grand march. The acts, which included the talking horse, jugglers, monkeys, Shetland ponies, clown and slack wire walkers were furnished by F. M. Barnes, manager of the Great Northern hippodrome. John Winkler, in his solitary clown act, ended the performance.

This week also marks another epoch in the circus business, the retirement of Col. William Cody from the sawdust arena he has graced so long. By order of the United States Court his show property was sold at auction at Denver yesterday, and it marks the close of the veteran showman's career as owner of a big show. In this connection the following dispatch from Denver is interesting: "Denver, Colo., Aug. 21--Two men stood and glowered at each other before the auctioneer who today was selling under the hammer the personal effects of Colonel William F. Cody (Buffalo Bill), by court order, following the bankruptcy of the old plainsman's Wild West show. Isham, the famous white horse ridden by the former Indian fighter, was led out.

"What am I offered?" sang out the auctioneer, slapping the steed on the flanks.

"Ten dollars," shouted one of the men who was an Indian.

"Twenty," raised the other whose flowing hair, broad hat and high boots denoted the Westerner of the day that is all but dead.

"The Westerner, after a hot contest, got the mount at \$150. The amount was more than the Indian could marshal.

"It's criminal, this is," asserted the Indian with considerable asperity as the horse was led away by its new owner. "I wanted to buy him to give him back to Buffalo Bill, and if that guy doesn't give him back, I'll steal that horse. I sold my own saddle and bridle, the only things I've got to raise money to bid on that horse."

"The Westerner overheard the remark.

"Pard, slip her here. It takes a man



to talk like that,' he addressed the Indian.' 'I'm Col. J. C. Bills of Lincoln, Neb., and I've known old Buffalo Bill for a hundred years or thereabouts, and your purpose in wanting to buy Isham was just the same as mine. He goes back to his old master tomorrow. I came all the way from Lincoln to do this.'

"The Indian is Carlo Miles, also an old frontier day friend of Colonel Cody.

"The sale marks the end of Col. Cody's career as a showman. So far as public exhibitions are concerned, he has shot the ashes from the last cigar and chased the last Indian. Of the hundreds of thousands of young and old who have visited Buffalo Bill's Wild West show during the past quarter of a century, there are probably few who will not feel regret at the announcement that because of financial difficulties, the show has had its final 'round-up.'

"Col. Cody has turned his seventieth year. During more than half his life he has been a prominent figure in the public eye. Mule driver, pony express rider, stage driver, scout, soldier, hunter, showman, are a few of the occupations which made his career probably the most picturesque of living men.

"From the day that his father was killed in a fight that gave 'bloody Kansas' its name, William F. Cody

was never idle. At the age of 15, already a man in size and strength, he had been herder, messenger and express driver and had won a name as a dead shot and a horseman with few equals.

"Under Gen. Albert Sidney Johnston he saw his first Indian fighting. The civil war found him a private in the 7th Kansas Cavalry, an active 'Jayhawker' regiment, and for more than 10 years after the close of the war services, first as scout and later as chief of scouts in the Indian wars. His commanders included Generals. Sherman, Sheridan, Miles, Custer, Crook, Ord and Fry--all the famous Indian fighters of the period. It was when he was chief of scouts under General Crook that he won fame by killing in single combat the Indian chief Yellow Hand, knife against tomahawk.

"In 1867 he won his title of Buffalo

Bill. It was then that a gang of 1,200 men were laying tracks of the Kansas Pacific across the plains and were famishing for fresh meat. Cody volunteered to furnish the meat and in 18 months with his horse Brigham and his favorite breach-loader, 'Lucretia Borgia,' he killed 4,280 bison.

"In the '70s Col. Cody tried acting in a melodrama of the West and it was the success of this which led to the formation of the 'Wild West' show with which his name has been linked for thirty years. The big show was launched in earnest in 1883. The first performance was given in Madison Square Garden, New York City, when Henry Ward Beecher introduced the famous plainsman and scout to the public. On the first presentation of the show in Washington a few weeks later General Philip Sheridan acted as master of ceremonies, riding in the Deadwood stagecoach (in which he had traveled to the Black Hills) accompanied by President Arthur. The army officers attended and the Speaker of the House found it necessary to adjourn on account of a lack of a quorum.

"When Buffalo Bill first launched his show the experienced men in the business laughed at him and said that it was a wild scheme, but in less than six months he was making more money than Barnum. The show toured Europe several times and was

just as successful there as on this side of the water.

"Just how much of Col. Cody has left of the millions of dollars he has earned in the show business is problematical. Of late years the profits have not been so large as formerly. It is said also that the famous old scout has lost considerable sums in poor investments. But those who are in the best position to know declare that the personal fortune of Buffalo Bill is unimpaired by the disasters that have overtaken the show that bears his name. It is generally believed that he is well fixed financially and in no danger of coming to want in his old age.

"In talking over his future plans, Buffalo Bill says: 'I expect to spend my remaining years in the West. Every cent that I have made in the show business I have invested in this section in developing the plains that are now fine homelands and people with happy American families. I was the first to undertake and successfully accomplish results under the Carey Arid Land Act through irrigation, the locality being in the Big Horn Basin. Once I spent \$700,000 in digging an irrigation canal before I got a cent returned. In addition to my large land holdings in Colorado, Wyoming and Nebraska, I possess many valuable mining claims in Arizona.'"

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# C I R C U S S E A S O N 2000



## CENTER RING TALKS, SEASON 1999-2000

All talks are scheduled to take place in the Wagon Room of the Ringling Museum of the Circus, the perfect setting for this series which celebrates the living history of the Circus. These programs are free with regular Museum admission, \$6 for individual talks. Lunch is available at the Banyan Café located directly across from the Circus Museum.

- Wed, Dec 15, 1999 11:30-1:00 p.m. → Pedro Reis
- Wed, Jan 19, 2000 11:30-1:00 p.m. → John Harriott
- Wed, Feb 16, 2000 11:30-1:00 p.m. → Margie Geiger
- Wed, Mar 15, 2000 11:30-1:00 p.m. → Steve Smith
- Wed, Apr 19, 2000 11:30-1:00 p.m. → Jackie LeClaire
- Wed, May 17, 2000 11:30-1:00 p.m. → Jeanette Williams

*Sponsored by the Unrestricted Charitable Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.*

## EXHIBITIONS

- The Boys from Baraboo to Big Top Bosses: History of the Ringling Circus
- Vaulters, Balancers, Trainers and Jugglers: Circus Performers → historic photographs from Museum archives &
- Lions and Tigers and Bears, Oh My! → historic circus poster collection

## SPECIAL EVENTS

- Circus Celebrity Night → Fri, Jan 14, 2000
- Windjammers Concert → Sat, Jan 29, 2000

*All dates subject to change. All events free to members and/or with regular admission price except as noted (\$). For information call 941/351-1660 or 359-5700; for Membership, call 359-5748. → Cover Photo: Elliot Er Witt, American, 1928-, Reno, Gelatin silver print.*

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